

IOWA BIRD LIFE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION





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Spring arrival dates of migrant birds in northeastern Iowa: A 32-year study

Tex A. Sordahl

ABSTRACT

During each of the last 32 years (1981–2012), I collected first-arrival records for migratory birds from observers in northeastern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota. The study area was the area within a 30-mile radius around Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa. For the 149 species with at least 10 years of arrival records, I present the mean and standard deviation of first-arrival dates, earliest and latest first-arrival dates, and the number of years with records. Of the 149 species listed, 66% breed or potentially breed in the study area and 34% are seen there only as migrants. Sixty-six percent of the species are short-distance migrants that winter in the Nearctic and 34% are long-distance migrants that winter in the Neotropics. The proportions of short- and long-distance migrants are similar for breeding species and species that pass through the area. Short-distance migrants arrive earlier and exhibit more variation in first-arrival dates than long-distance migrants. This is likely because the greater proximity of their wintering and breeding areas enables their migration schedule to be influenced by weather. Thus, short-distance migrants can be considered “weather migrants” and long-distance migrants can be considered “calendar migrants.” Spring migration in northeastern Iowa occurs throughout March, April, and May, and it has two peaks. The first peak, in late March, represents the arrival of most of the waterbirds as frozen rivers and ponds open up. The second and larger peak, in early May, represents the return of most of the long-distance migrants from the Neotropics.

INTRODUCTION

The official checklist of Iowa birds (Johnson 2011) contains 308 species that are considered Regular in occurrence (seen every year or nearly every year). The Iowa populations of a majority of those species are migratory. Their migrations are of much interest, especially the spring migration, when the birds exhibit conspicuous alternate (breeding) plumages, singing, and courtship behavior. Although spring migration is relatively well-known, most accounts focus on earliest first-arrival dates, which tend to obscure the mean arrival times. Spring arrival dates also vary across the state, e.g., earlier in southern Iowa than in northern Iowa. Therefore, detailed information from specific parts of Iowa is needed to have a complete picture of spring migration. This paper addresses that need for the northeastern part of the state. Comparable data have not been published for other parts of the state.

For Iowa as a whole, mean spring arrival dates were reported by Moonman (1964), but without any details. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union publishes spring records in its Spring Field Reports in *Iowa Bird Life*, and early arrival dates are summarized on its web site (http://www.iowabirds.org/birds/docs/Early_Late.pdf). Details of arrival and occurrence were presented in two authoritative state bird books (Dinsmore et al. 1984, Kent and Dinsmore 1996).

For northeastern Iowa, Reis (2010) published personal natural history accounts that included typical weekly spring arrival dates. Koenig (unpublished manuscript) accumulated extreme early and late spring dates for each species in Winneshiek County. I presented both earliest and mean first-arrival dates for northeastern Iowa in a non-technical article, based on first-arrival records that I collected over a 31-year period (Sordahl 2012a, 2012b). In this paper, I present more complete information for each species over a 32-year period. Specifically, I give the earliest and latest first-arrival dates recorded, along with the mean and standard deviation of first-arrival dates. I also examine the migration pattern as it unfolds in northeastern Iowa, and show that long-distance migrants arrive later and exhibit less variation in first-arrival date than short-distance migrants.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

During the last 32 years (1981–2012), I collected 3,915 first-arrival records for 229 species from 176 observers. I accepted records from within a 30-mile radius of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa (Figure 1). About 99% of the records were from northeastern Iowa (86% from Winneshiek, 11% from Allamakee, and 2% from four other counties) and 1% were from southeastern Minnesota (Fillmore and Houston counties). Observers included college students and faculty, active birdwatchers, and members of the general public.

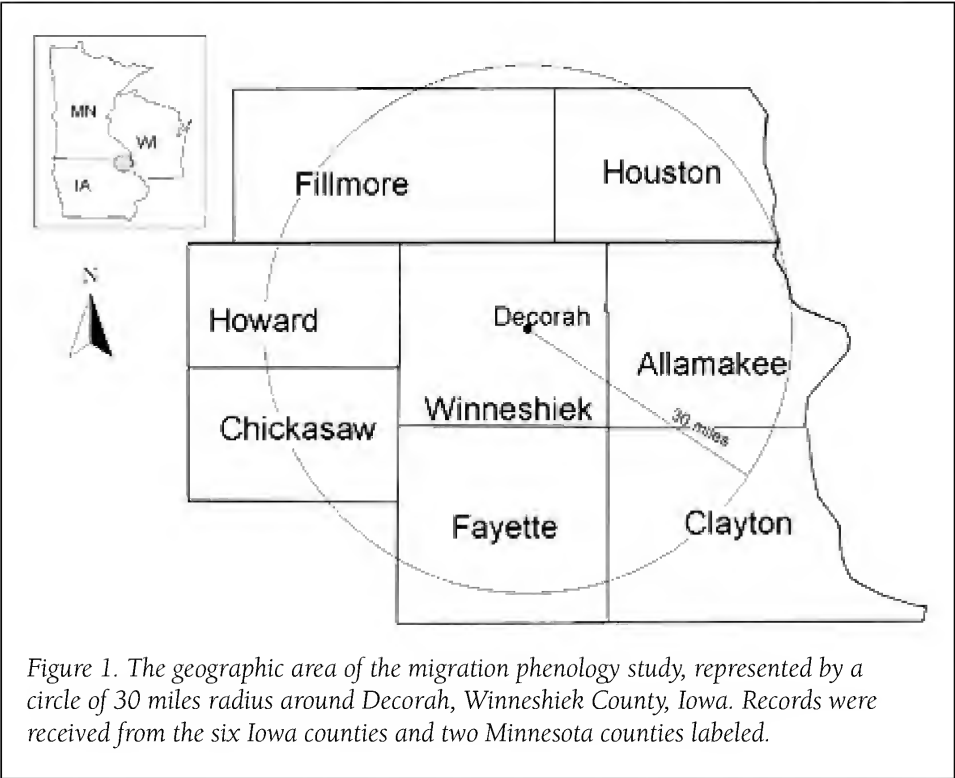


Figure 1. The geographic area of the migration phenology study, represented by a circle of 30 miles radius around Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa. Records were received from the six Iowa counties and two Minnesota counties labeled.

Eighty-three percent of the records came from 11 experienced birdwatchers. I checked all reports for credibility before adding them to my database.

The reliability of mean first-arrival dates and measures of variation depends on sample sizes. Therefore, I present only those 149 species for which I have at least 10 years of first-arrival records. The other 80 species I recorded were observed less than one year out of three and therefore can be considered rare. Indeed, 45 of those species were recorded less than one year out of ten (i.e., three or fewer years during the 32-year study).

I determined the wintering range of each species and its breeding status in northeastern Iowa by consulting standard references (Jackson et al. 1996, Kent and Dinsmore 1996, American Ornithologists' Union 1998, Sibley 2000). I categorized each species as either a short- or long-distance migrant. Species whose primary wintering range is in the United States or northern Mexico (i.e., the Nearctic region) were considered short-distance migrants. Species whose primary wintering range is in the West Indies, Central America, or South America (i.e., the Neotropical region) were considered long-distance migrants. Taxonomy used in this paper follows the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list (1998 and Supplements published in *The Auk* through 2012).

I entered all first-arrival dates into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet as Julian dates, computed the mean date and standard deviation for each species, and then converted back to standard non-leap year calendar notation for presentation. I compared the standard deviations of first-arrival dates of short-distance versus long-distance migrants using a two-tailed independent samples t-test. To examine whether the results for the overall sample were influenced by the number of related species in each category (phylogeny bias), I used a two-tailed paired t-test to compare the mean standard deviations of the first-arrival dates for short-distance and long-distance migrants within all families that had both types of migrants. To determine whether there was a difference between breeding species and pass-through migrants in the proportion of short-distance and long-distance migrants, I used a 2 X 2 chi-square test. Statistical tests were conducted with Microsoft Excel 2010 and significance was set at an alpha level of 0.05.

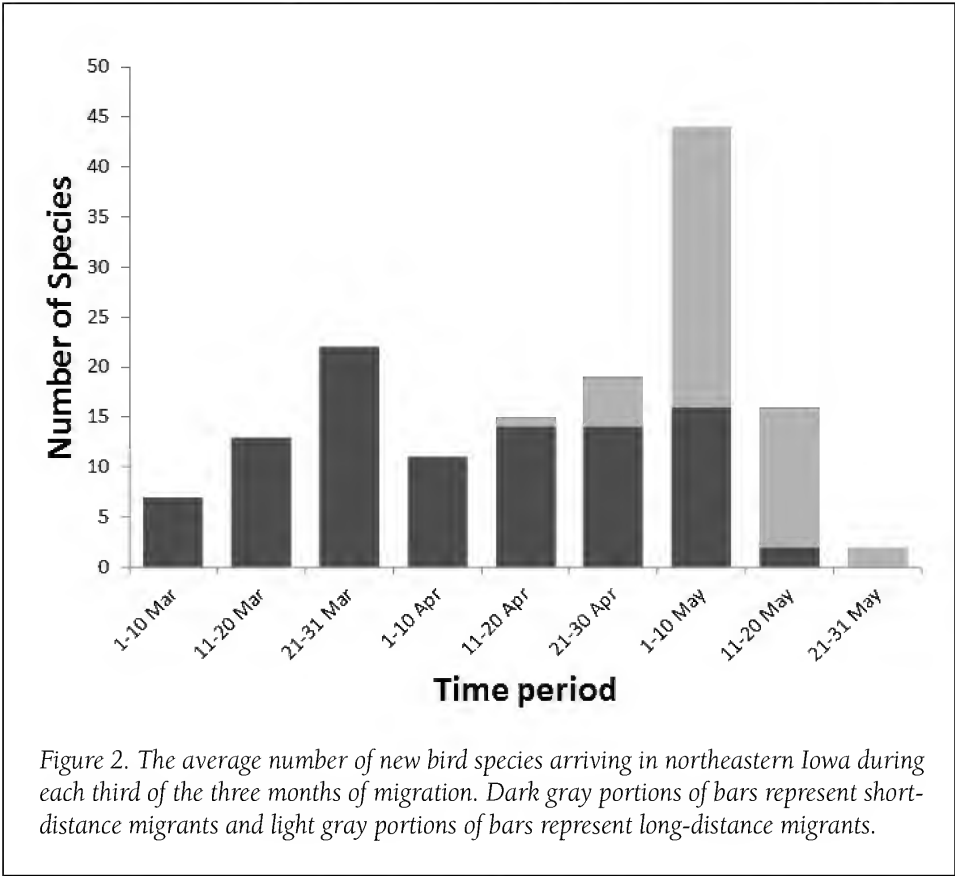
RESULTS

The mean and standard deviation of first-arrival dates, earliest and latest first-arrival dates, and the number of years with records varied by species (Table 1). On the average, I recorded first-arrival dates for 123 species each year. Of the 149 species listed, 51 (34%) are seen in the study area as migrants only, and 98 (66%) breed or potentially breed there. Of the 149 species listed, 99 (66%) are short-distance migrants and 50 (34%) are long-distance migrants. Of the 98 species that breed in northeastern Iowa, 64 (65%) are short-distance migrants and 34 (35%) are long-distance migrants. Of the 51 species that are migrants only in northeastern Iowa, 35 (69%) are short-distance migrants and 16 (31%) are long-distance migrants. The proportions of short-distance and long-distance migrants are not significantly different for breeding species and species that pass through the area ($\chi^2 = 0.166$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.68$).

The mean standard deviation of first-arrival dates was greater for short-distance migrants than for long-distance migrants, 10.0 days versus 6.2 days ($t = 7.31$, $df = 147$, $P < 0.01$). To control for possible phylogeny bias in my data set, I compared the mean

standard deviations of first-arrival times within the nine families that have both short- and long-distance migrants (see Table 1). Standard deviations were greater for short-distance than for long-distance migrants in six of the nine families, and the paired comparison was statistically significant ($t = 2.46$, $df = 8$, $P = 0.04$). The difference within families suggests little effect of phylogeny bias on the conclusion that short-distance migrants exhibit more variation in first-arrival date than long-distance migrants.

Spring migration in northeastern Iowa encompasses the months of March, April, and May. The earliest mean first-arrival date is 3 March (Canada Goose) and the latest mean first-arrival date is 24 May (Dickcissel). Dividing the months into thirds helps visualize how the arrival of new species unfolds (Figure 2). Spring migration has two peaks, the first in late March and the second in early May. The first peak represents the arrival of most of the waterbirds and corresponds to the opening up of frozen rivers and ponds. Of the 22 new species that arrive in late March, 12 are waterfowl (Anatidae) and three are waterbirds other than waterfowl. These are all short-distance migrants. The late March peak is followed by a lull in early April, after which the migration builds toward its grand peak in



early May. The early May peak, when 44 new species arrive, is produced by the arrival of 28 long-distance migrants (Figure 2) such as shorebirds, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, and wood-warblers.

DISCUSSION

Short-distance migrants arrive earlier than long-distance migrants in northeastern Iowa. This could be related to the fact that short-distance migrants have a shorter journey. However, short-distance and long-distance migrants are considered to be part of different migration systems, the Nearctic and Nearctic-Neotropical systems, respectively (Cox 2010). Therefore, there may be fundamental differences in their migration behavior.

I found that short-distance migrants exhibit more variation in first-arrival times than long-distance migrants. Other studies, too, have found that earlier arriving species vary more in arrival date than late arriving species (summarized in Pettingill 1985). Short-distance migrants, whose wintering areas are closer to their breeding areas, are exposed to weather that is relevant to their migratory movements. For example, both the Canada Goose and the American Robin are known to move north in the eastern United States just behind the main spring thaw along a front that has a mean daily temperature of 2°C (36°F). In other words, they follow the 2°C isotherm northward (Gill 2007). On the other hand, long-distance migrants, which winter far from their breeding areas, experience weather that is unlikely to be useful for telling them when to migrate. Their migration schedule tends to follow the calendar.

Short-distance migrants can therefore be considered “weather migrants” and long-distance migrants can be considered “calendar migrants”. The weather migrants of early spring are much influenced by weather, whereas the calendar migrants of late spring are influenced only a little by weather (Van Tyne and Berger 1976). During the last century, many birds have advanced their spring arrival times in response to warmer spring temperatures. However, long-distance Neotropical migrants have done so much less than short-distance Nearctic migrants (Cox 2010).

Classifying birds as either short-distance or long-distance migrants is subjective for some species that have large winter ranges. The winter range of specific populations that occur in Iowa is often unknown. An example is the Turkey Vulture, whose winter range extends from the southeastern United States south into South America. The winter range of Iowa vultures is unknown, but evidence from Wisconsin (M. J. Mossman pers. comm.) hints that Iowa birds may winter in Central or South America. However, using range maps to classify species, I listed the Turkey Vulture as a short-distance migrant. Despite the possibility of a small number of inaccurate classifications, this study applied consistent methodology to a large sample, which should reveal real patterns and yield robust conclusions. The descriptive data presented here on arrival dates in northeastern Iowa should be a useful reference for other studies around the state.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to the 176 observers who contributed arrival dates to my database. I was personally responsible for 26.9% of the records, so my debt to others is great. The following observers each contributed at least 1% of the records: Dennis Carter (28.7%),

Larry Reis (11.7%), Lee Zieke and Lindsay Lee (6.2%), Mark Dietzenbach (3.1%), Andy Paulios (1.9%), Ellen Bell (1.7%), Susan and Leroy Anderson (1.6%), and Bob Chapman, Jr. (1.4%). I also thank Karla A. Bloem, Cristina L. Liggett, Samantha L. Stykel, and Jennie K. Solverson for significant assistance with managing the database. Kirk J. Larsen and Robert Fitton prepared Figure 1. Eric Baack, James J. Dinsmore, and Stephen J. Dinsmore provided helpful reviews of the manuscript.

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Table 1. Spring first-arrival dates of 149 migrant birds in northeastern Iowa (1981-2012). Also shown are the breeding status (b indicates breeder, b in parentheses indicates potential breeder, m indicates migrant), migration distance (S = short, L = long), standard deviation (SD) of first arrival dates (in days), and number (n) of years with records for each species.

Species	Status (Breeder/ Migrant)	Migration (Short/ Long)	Mean First Date	SD	Earliest First Date	Latest First Date	n
ANATIDAE							
Greater White-fronted Goose	m	S	18-Mar	11	1-Mar	10-Apr	14
Snow Goose	m	S	23-Mar	13	28-Feb	12-Apr	18
Canada Goose	b	S	3-Mar	8	15-Feb	15-Mar	15
Tundra Swan	m	S	26-Mar	11	3-Mar	19-Apr	20
Wood Duck	b	S	19-Mar	8	6-Mar	5-Apr	31
Gadwall	(b)	S	21-Mar	14	6-Feb	19-Apr	30
American Wigeon	(b)	S	22-Mar	14	6-Feb	16-Apr	32
American Black Duck	m	S	25-Mar	17	19-Feb	19-Apr	14
Mallard	b	S	12-Mar	10	15-Feb	1-Apr	31
Blue-winged Teal	b	S	26-Mar	9	9-Mar	18-Apr	30
Northern Shoveler	(b)	S	24-Mar	11	8-Mar	21-Apr	29
Northern Pintail	(b)	S	19-Mar	12	22-Feb	10-Apr	23
Green-winged Teal	(b)	S	26-Mar	12	3-Mar	18-Apr	29
Canvasback	(b)	S	22-Mar	11	25-Feb	10-Apr	29
Redhead	(b)	S	25-Mar	10	28-Feb	11-Apr	27
Ring-necked Duck	(b)	S	21-Mar	9	1-Mar	11-Apr	31
Lesser Scaup	(b)	S	18-Mar	14	15-Feb	13-Apr	32
Bufflehead	m	S	22-Mar	10	2-Mar	13-Apr	30
Common Goldeneye	m	S	12-Mar	12	19-Feb	10-Apr	25
Hooded Merganser	b	S	18-Mar	11	28-Feb	20-Apr	30
Common Merganser	m	S	8-Mar	13	13-Feb	31-Mar	31
Red-breasted Merganser	m	S	4-Apr	8	21-Mar	19-Apr	18
Ruddy Duck	b	S	3-Apr	11	3-Mar	21-Apr	28
GAVIIDAE							
Common Loon	m	S	15-Apr	16	14-Mar	10-May	16
PODICIPEDIDAE							
Pied-billed Grebe	b	S	31-Mar	12	26-Feb	23-Apr	31
Horned Grebe	m	S	16-Apr	12	28-Mar	1-May	10

Species	Status (Breeder/ Migrant)	Migration (Short/ Long)	Mean First Date	SD	Earliest First Date	Latest First Date	n
PHALACROCORACIDAE							
Double-crested Cormorant	b	S	11-Apr	12	23-Mar	12-May	24
PELECANIDAE							
American White Pelican	m	S	13-Apr	11	26-Mar	29-Apr	19
ARDEIDAE							
Great Blue Heron	b	S	21-Mar	8	1-Mar	3-Apr	32
Great Egret	b	S	8-Apr	9	25-Mar	29-Apr	28
Green Heron	b	S	4-May	11	18-Apr	3-Jun	28
Black-crowned Night-Heron	(b)	S	30-Apr	13	13-Apr	27-May	14
CATHARTIDAE							
Turkey Vulture	b	S	21-Mar	12	15-Feb	22-Apr	32
PANDIONIDAE							
Osprey	m	S	13-Apr	10	20-Mar	29-Apr	25
ACCIPITRIDAE							
Northern Harrier	b	S	19-Mar	18	15-Feb	23-Apr	24
Broad-winged Hawk	b	L	23-Apr	7	7-Apr	3-May	20
RALLIDAE							
Sora	b	S	30-Apr	11	11-Apr	25-May	24
American Coot	b	S	28-Mar	10	3-Mar	18-Apr	32
GRUIDAE							
Sandhill Crane	b	S	21-Mar	14	5-Mar	28-Apr	17
CHARADRIIDAE							
Semipalmated Plover	m	S	15-May	12	24-Apr	2-Jun	13
Killdeer	b	S	8-Mar	11	19-Feb	31-Mar	31
SCOLOPACIDAE							
Spotted Sandpiper	b	S	29-Apr	9	2-Apr	12-May	27
Solitary Sandpiper	m	L	30-Apr	5	20-Apr	11-May	25
Greater Yellowlegs	m	S	10-Apr	11	13-Mar	30-Apr	31
Lesser Yellowlegs	m	S	19-Apr	15	16-Mar	15-May	27
Semipalmated Sandpiper	m	L	17-May	11	26-Apr	2-Jun	13
Least Sandpiper	m	S	10-May	9	22-Apr	26-May	19
White-rumped Sandpiper	m	L	23-May	11	9-May	6-Jun	10
Pectoral Sandpiper	m	L	25-Apr	19	29-Mar	21-May	18

Species	Status (Breeder/ Migrant)	Migration (Short/ Long)	Mean First Date	SD	Earliest First Date	Latest First Date	n
SCOLOPACIDAE, continued							
Dunlin	m	S	10-May	12	20-Apr	26-May	14
Wilson's Snipe	b	S	2-Apr	9	12-Mar	18-Apr	23
American Woodcock	b	S	21-Mar	9	23-Feb	12-Apr	28
Wilson's Phalarope	(b)	L	8-May	12	20-Apr	28-May	13
LARIDAE							
Bonaparte's Gull	m	S	21-Apr	11	8-Apr	16-May	19
Ring-billed Gull	m	S	16-Mar	14	11-Feb	9-Apr	31
Black Tern	(b)	L	11-May	6	3-May	26-May	27
Forster's Tern	(b)	S	30-Apr	10	10-Apr	20-May	18
COLUMBIDAE							
Mourning Dove	b	S	14-Mar	13	18-Feb	6-Apr	31
CAPRIMULGIDAE							
Common Nighthawk	b	L	13-May	5	25-Apr	25-May	30
Eastern Whip-poor-will	b	L	6-May	8	24-Apr	21-May	17
APODIDAE							
Chimney Swift	b	L	30-Apr	5	19-Apr	8-May	32
TROCHILIDAE							
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	b	L	7-May	7	28-Apr	24-May	29
ALCEDINIDAE							
Belted Kingfisher	b	S	19-Mar	15	17-Feb	18-Apr	17
PICIDAE							
Red-headed Woodpecker	b	S	29-Apr	13	3-Apr	21-May	12
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	b	S	11-Apr	10	27-Mar	8-May	28
Northern Flicker	b	S	25-Mar	8	10-Mar	5-Apr	25
TYRANNIDAE							
Olive-sided Flycatcher	m	L	18-May	6	9-May	29-May	14
Eastern Wood-Pewee	b	L	17-May	7	30-Apr	30-May	29
Willow Flycatcher	b	L	18-May	9	4-May	3-Jun	13
Least Flycatcher	b	L	10-May	6	29-Apr	20-May	21
Eastern Phoebe	b	S	4-Apr	16	9-Mar	12-May	31
Great Crested Flycatcher	b	L	9-May	5	28-Apr	24-May	32
Eastern Kingbird	b	L	5-May	5	25-Apr	16-May	30

Species	Status (Breeder/ Migrant)	Migration (Short/ Long)	Mean First Date	SD	Earliest First Date	Latest First Date	n
VIREONIDAE							
Yellow-throated Vireo	b	L	11-May	4	4-May	21-May	26
Blue-headed Vireo	m	S	7-May	4	30-Apr	16-May	18
Warbling Vireo	b	L	8-May	4	30-Apr	20-May	32
Red-eyed Vireo	b	L	13-May	4	6-May	21-May	27
HIRUNDINIDAE							
Purple Martin	b	L	20-Apr	12	19-Mar	15-May	26
Tree Swallow	b	S	3-Apr	9	14-Mar	18-Apr	32
N. Rough-winged Swallow	b	S	21-Apr	6	12-Apr	11-May	31
Bank Swallow	b	L	8-May	8	25-Apr	26-May	26
Cliff Swallow	b	L	2-May	5	18-Apr	8-May	32
Barn Swallow	b	L	22-Apr	6	13-Apr	11-May	30
TROGLODYTIDAE							
House Wren	b	S	24-Apr	6	9-Apr	6-May	32
Winter Wren	b	S	7-Apr	7	30-Mar	22-Apr	14
Sedge Wren	b	S	17-May	9	2-May	28-May	15
Marsh Wren	b	S	9-May	8	24-Apr	26-May	18
POLIOPTILIDAE							
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	b	S	29-Apr	6	20-Apr	12-May	26
REGULIDAE							
Golden-crowned Kinglet	m	S	1-Apr	6	22-Mar	17-Apr	19
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	m	S	5-Apr	6	22-Mar	20-Apr	22
TURDIDAE							
Eastern Bluebird	b	S	10-Mar	11	20-Feb	4-Apr	30
Veery	b	L	10-May	4	4-May	18-May	15
Gray-cheeked Thrush	m	L	8-May	5	27-Apr	18-May	15
Swainson's Thrush	m	L	10-May	4	27-Apr	20-May	29
Hermit Thrush	m	S	11-Apr	7	31-Mar	29-Apr	26
Wood Thrush	b	L	9-May	9	14-Apr	23-May	28
American Robin	b	S	4-Mar	7	13-Feb	19-Mar	32
MIMIDAE							
Gray Catbird	b	S	3-May	6	11-Apr	11-May	32
Brown Thrasher	b	S	17-Apr	7	5-Apr	5-May	32

Species	Status (Breeder/ Migrant)	Migration (Short/ Long)	Mean First Date	SD	Earliest First Date	Latest First Date	n
PARULIDAE							
Ovenbird	b	L	7-May	4	30-Apr	15-May	28
Northern Waterthrush	m	L	6-May	5	22-Apr	14-May	29
Golden-winged Warbler	m	L	10-May	4	3-May	20-May	15
Blue-winged Warbler	b	L	10-May	7	1-May	26-May	17
Black-and-white Warbler	(b)	S	4-May	4	25-Apr	10-May	28
Tennessee Warbler	m	L	11-May	6	1-May	21-May	30
Orange-crowned Warbler	m	S	2-May	6	21-Apr	13-May	19
Nashville Warbler	m	S	6-May	4	26-Apr	13-May	29
Mourning Warbler	m	L	19-May	5	12-May	29-May	18
Common Yellowthroat	b	S	5-May	5	23-Apr	21-May	30
American Redstart	b	L	8-May	4	1-May	16-May	30
Cape May Warbler	m	L	12-May	5	5-May	24-May	14
Northern Parula	(b)	L	10-May	5	3-May	20-May	17
Magnolia Warbler	m	L	9-May	6	26-Apr	25-May	28
Blackburnian Warbler	m	L	11-May	4	3-May	18-May	21
Yellow Warbler	b	L	6-May	3	28-Apr	12-May	31
Chestnut-sided Warbler	(b)	L	10-May	3	3-May	15-May	26
Blackpoll Warbler	m	L	11-May	5	1-May	18-May	16
Palm Warbler	m	S	1-May	6	20-Apr	12-May	32
Yellow-rumped Warbler	m	S	13-Apr	7	3-Apr	30-Apr	31
Black-throated Green Warbler	m	S	10-May	7	29-Apr	27-May	17
Canada Warbler	m	L	18-May	5	10-May	29-May	17
Wilson's Warbler	m	S	10-May	3	4-May	18-May	26
EMBERIZIDAE							
Eastern Towhee	b	S	23-Apr	12	29-Mar	15-May	26
Chipping Sparrow	b	S	13-Apr	8	21-Mar	29-Apr	31
Clay-colored Sparrow	(b)	S	10-May	9	27-Apr	26-May	10
Field Sparrow	b	S	11-Apr	9	16-Mar	25-Apr	31
Vesper Sparrow	b	S	27-Apr	15	1-Apr	25-May	18
Savannah Sparrow	b	S	25-Apr	10	28-Mar	12-May	25
Fox Sparrow	m	S	21-Mar	11	5-Mar	18-Apr	24

Species	Status (Breeder/ Migrant)	Migration (Short/ Long)	Mean First Date	SD	Earliest First Date	Latest First Date	n
EMBERIZIDAE, continued							
Song Sparrow	b	S	13-Mar	11	19-Feb	4-Apr	31
Lincoln's Sparrow	m	S	4-May	9	11-Apr	14-May	22
Swamp Sparrow	b	S	16-Apr	14	27-Mar	12-May	27
White-throated Sparrow	m	S	17-Apr	11	31-Mar	9-May	28
Harris's Sparrow	m	S	4-May	9	4-Apr	14-May	16
White-crowned Sparrow	m	S	30-Apr	6	14-Apr	11-May	26
CARDINALIDAE							
Scarlet Tanager	b	L	10-May	4	1-May	18-May	27
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	b	L	1-May	5	21-Apr	10-May	31
Indigo Bunting	b	L	6-May	6	21-Apr	18-May	29
Dickcissel	b	L	24-May	11	7-May	7-Jun	15
ICTERIDAE							
Bobolink	b	L	9-May	5	1-May	19-May	30
Red-winged Blackbird	b	S	6-Mar	7	17-Feb	26-Mar	32
Eastern Meadowlark	b	S	19-Mar	9	7-Mar	7-Apr	15
Western Meadowlark	b	S	23-Mar	9	14-Mar	10-Apr	10
Yellow-headed Blackbird	b	S	26-Apr	8	15-Apr	16-May	27
Rusty Blackbird	m	S	26-Mar	11	6-Mar	21-Apr	18
Common Grackle	b	S	8-Mar	10	7-Feb	25-Mar	32
Brown-headed Cowbird	b	S	6-Apr	14	6-Mar	5-May	31
Orchard Oriole	b	L	7-May	5	30-Apr	16-May	17
Baltimore Oriole	b	L	3-May	6	8-Apr	10-May	31

Meet an Iowa Birder—Tex A. Sordahl

Paul D. B. Skrade

When Tex Sordahl was born in 1951 in Viroqua, Wisconsin, his father had visions of raising a major league baseball pitcher. However, Tex's early years spent roaming the hills and forests, and splashing in creeks and ponds of the Driftless Region had an impact on him. His time outdoors led to an interest in animals and he became a voracious reader, searching out every book on the subject he could find, including field guides and the encyclopedia. By the third grade he decided that he wanted to be a zoologist, and that choice led to where he is today.

Tex crossed the Mississippi River to attend Luther College in Winneshiek County, Iowa, where he graduated with a degree in biology in 1973. For the first three years of college he was actually in the pre-med track, but some pivotal experiences led him back to his early interest in zoology, and in particular ornithology. Famous ornithologist Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. came to Luther to present an Audubon Wildlife Film, and after the film Tex picked up one of the brochures that Pettingill had put out. This was how Tex learned about the Audubon Ecology Camps and applied to work at the camp in northwest Wisconsin. Although he was hired at the camp as a maintenance assistant, Tex's position meant that he was able to go on all of the field trips since he was also the bus and pontoon boat driver. He spent three summers at the camp, living in a cabin in the woods and learning natural history from the staff of college professors. He credits his supervisor, expert birder and wildlife artist Rocky Knuth, as the most influential person in developing his interest in birds.

With his interest in birds and wildlife re-kindled, Tex decided to go to graduate school instead of medical school. When he had the opportunity to attend Utah State University and work with renowned ornithologist Keith Dixon, Tex took it, in part so he could see some new western bird species! Tex found Utah to be "a relatively unexplored paradise for shorebirds" and so he chose to focus his research on this taxonomic group. His M.S. thesis topic was the vocalizations of Willets and his doctoral dissertation was on the antipredator



Tex Sordahl on the Luther College campus, Winneshiek, 16 November 2012. Photograph by Mary Lewis.

behavior and parental care of American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts. For the next 25 years Tex continued to study breeding shorebirds, publishing papers on everything from copulatory behavior to eggshell removal and mobbing behavior.

After completing his Ph.D. in 1980, Tex headed north, as far north in the United States as you can go! He was fortunate to participate in Frank Pitelka's legendary Arctic shorebird research program at Barrow, Alaska. However, this experience was cut short when he was hired for a faculty position at his alma mater, where he remains today. Tex is currently Professor of Biology and Department Chair at Luther College.

Tex has had a unique opportunity to "pay it forward" and provide young people with the experiences that he was given. He has done this not only in his position at Luther but he also spent a summer teaching ornithology at the Audubon Camp in Wisconsin after finishing his M.S. degree, and after finishing his Ph.D. he taught ornithology for a summer at the Audubon Camp in Wyoming. At Luther, he has taught many classes that have inspired students to work with birds and nature including Ornithology, Vertebrate Natural History, Animal Behavior, Environmental Conservation, and Biodiversity. He has also led students on eleven field trips to the Texas Gulf Coast, Southern California, San Salvador in the Bahamas, Big Bend National Park, and Southeastern Arizona, each of them naturally focused on birds.

Students at Luther College have also been involved in undergraduate research supervised by Tex. These studies have included work with Turkey Vultures, Eastern Screech-Owls, Killdeer, meadowlarks, Canada Geese, and Bald Eagles. Some students are fortunate enough to learn study skin preparation and museum curatorial skills because of Tex's other role in the Biology Department. He is also the director/curator of the Hoslett Museum of Natural History, which has a significant eggshell collection (the P. B. Peabody and Frances C. Bordner Memorial Bird Egg and Nest Collection) and nice collections of bird mounts and study skins. Birders visiting Decorah should peruse the hallways of Valders Hall of Science where Tex has several interesting displays, including a unique arrangement of the owls of Iowa.

While he was in school, Tex's interest in animals had him outdoors, hunting and fishing, and he fondly recalls a five-week camping trip in Florida his senior year of college. Now, when he is not teaching or working in the museum, Tex enjoys traveling to places to see new birds. Some of his best trips were made possible by sabbatical leaves. Of the four sabbaticals that he has taken, each involved 2–4 months of international travel and birding.

His first sabbatical was to Norway to pursue his research interest in shorebirds. The other three have all been to the Southern Hemisphere, to Australia and New Zealand. On his first trip to Australia he spent a month at the Broome Bird Observatory, which is "arguably the best site in the world for overwintering migratory shorebirds." These trips have provided him with some amazing bird experiences, such as seeing the impressive 5'6" tall, 150 pound Southern Cassowary, the secretive Southern Brown Kiwi, and finally the Black Stilt of New Zealand, of which scientists estimate there are only about 80 left. He lists three of his most breath-taking birds as the Superb Lyrebird of Australia, the Resplendent Quetzal of Costa Rica, and Great Gray Owl of Sax-Zim Bog. His world life list is approximately 1,180 (depending on taxonomic changes and differences between countries), North American list is approximately 532 species, his Winneshiek County list is 231 species, and his yard list

is 94 species (plus 19 mammals). Even with all of the birds he has seen around the world, Tex's favorite remains the American Avocet.

I give Tex credit for bringing me back to birding, and where I am on my career path. For more than a decade I had generally ignored the birds around me, but in Tex's Vertebrate Natural History and Field Biology class he took us to Cardinal Marsh and Lake Meyer, two of his favorite birding spots. He opened my eyes to the diversity of the migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, and I'll never forget our surprise when, out of the blue, he started making this crazy "spishing" noise, and then it actually brought the songbirds down from the tops of the trees! When I saw that, I was hooked. After graduating from college I was a part of Tex's Turkey Vulture study, which was really my first experience in ornithology research, and now what I do today.

However, I'm not the only one of Tex's former students that has gone to the birds. Eight out of forty-one of his students that went to graduate and professional schools did research on birds, and another 15 were in zoology or wildlife biology. One of Tex's flock is an American Ornithologists' Union Fellow, another is the coordinator of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, and another is a Wildlife Education Specialist at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah, just to describe a few. One of his former students, Karla Bloem, started the International Festival of Owls in Houston, Minnesota and is creating an International Owl Center. Overall, Tex has had a really positive impact on the field of ornithology, which continues today. The next time you're birding at Cardinal Marsh or Lake Meyer in Winneshiek County, keep an eye out for the Luther vans. You might see Tex with a group of Luther students, peering through binoculars and spotting scopes, and having their eyes opened to a whole new world.



Tex Sordahl with Alice the Great Horned Owl at the Houston Nature Center, Houston, Minnesota, 28 May 2008. Photograph by Robin Kutz.

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Field Reports—Summer 2012

James J. Dinsmore



James J. Dinsmore

After last year's flooding, this summer's weather was dominated by one of Iowa's most extreme droughts in decades. One Accidental and four Casual species were found, and one new nesting species was added to Iowa's list. Blue Grosbeaks continued their range expansion, and Red Crossbills invaded Iowa for the first time since 2008.

WEATHER

June temperatures were higher than normal, averaging 71.6 degrees or 1.9 degrees above normal and the 28th warmest June in 140 years of records. June started out unseasonably cool with low temperatures in the 40s and highs in the 60s. The 37 degrees at Atlantic on the first was the lowest June temperature reported in Iowa in nine years. After that, below-normal temperatures were recorded on only eight days and highs in the 90s were reached on

many days. Very hot weather arrived on 27 June when several stations reported highs of 101 degrees. The next day it was 104 in Keokuk, the highest June temperature reported in Iowa since 1988.

June rainfall averaged 2.99 inches, 2.03 inches below normal and the 21st driest June on record. It was dry across much of Iowa with only a few areas of west-central, southwestern and southeastern Iowa having above-normal precipitation. Northwestern Iowa in particular was very dry. Sibley with 0.36 inches, Sheldon with 0.48, and Sanborn with 0.53 all had their lowest June rainfall totals in 100 or more years of records. Underwood in southwestern Iowa had 7.05 inches of rain, the most of any station. Although June typically has much severe weather, no tornadoes were reported this year, a first since 1988. The most severe weather event reported was high winds that passed from Des Moines east into east-central Iowa on the 27th.

July was hot and dry. Statewide temperatures averaged 79.7 degrees, 6.1 degrees above normal, the 3rd hottest July on record, and Iowa's hottest July since 1936. Temperatures averaged above normal on 27 of the 31 days and reached 100 degrees on 12 days with a high of 107 at Donnellson, Fairfield, and Keokuk on the 23rd. That was the state's highest temperature since 1999. Des Moines, Keosauqua, and Osceola all had ten days with temperatures reaching 100 degrees. The temperature low was 51 degrees at Elkader on 11 and 12 July.

July rainfall totaled 1.16 inches, 3.34 inches below average, the 5th driest July on record, and the driest since 1975. Rainfall was below normal throughout the state ranging from none at Underwood to 4.52 inches at Stanley. Other stations with little rainfall included Atlantic and Audubon with only a trace, Logan with 0.02 inches, and Guthrie Center with 0.12 inches. All broke their old July record. The only significant rain event occurred on the 25th when about 0.35 inches fell on about a third of the state.

BIRDS OF SUMMER

Habitat Conditions

The extremely dry July left all of Iowa in severe or extreme drought conditions by the end of the month. Several observers (Paul Hertz, Stephen Dinsmore, pers. comm.) commented on the number of lakes and wetlands that dried out this summer. As they dried out, some attracted large numbers of migrants such as the thousands of shorebirds at Trumbull Lake. However, the same conditions undoubtedly led to poor nesting success for some waterfowl and other marsh birds.

The Iowa DNR has begun restoring more natural conditions on some of Iowa's shallow natural lakes. In those lakes the vegetation had gradually reverted to a narrow ring of emergent plants, especially cattail, around the lake's edge and a large pool of open water in the middle. Lowering the water level allows aquatic plants to germinate in the exposed mud and leads to a mixture of emergent vegetation and pools of open water, better habitat for many marsh birds. Several years ago, this restoration process was started on Diamond Lake in Dickinson County. The presence of nesting Redhead, Red-necked Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, and American Coot there this year is evidence of the program's success. Similar management is planned for other lakes.

The gradual reduction of the federal Conservation Reserve Program has led to further loss of grasslands in Iowa. Iowa is scheduled to lose about 230,000 acres of CRP land in 2012, reducing the state's total to about 1,430,000 acres, down from 2,200,000 acres in 1995. Another 184,000 acres are scheduled to leave the program in 2013. Some new land is being put into CRP but the long-term trend is a steady reduction in the number of acres enrolled and a loss of grassland habitat in the state. In addition, with high commodity prices, thousands of acres of hayfields and small grains have been converted to corn and soybeans, further reducing grassland cover in Iowa.

Breeding Species

Probably the most interesting news for nesting species came from three tiny spoil islands on the Mississippi River in Clinton County. There a Neotropic Cormorant nest was found, Iowa's third new nesting species reported from those islands in the last six summers. Herring Gulls and Cattle Egrets, which nested on those islands in 2010, nested there again this summer, and American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, and Great Egrets all had good nesting years. Elsewhere in Iowa, the drought conditions probably adversely affected several aquatic species including Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, and Sandhill Crane. After several years of steadily declining populations, Northern Bobwhite, Gray Partridge, and Ring-necked Pheasant all apparently had good years. Ospreys, Bald Eagles,

and Peregrine Falcons also did well this year. Among rare species, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Red-necked Grebe, Northern Harrier, King Rail, Least Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, and Pine Warbler all were found nesting this summer.

Among species for which there is some conservation concern, no one mentioned any evidence of nesting by either Piping Plover or Least Tern. Several Black Tern colonies were found but none of Forster's Tern. Both Black-billed Cuckoo and Loggerhead Shrike continue to be a concern with only a few reports of each this summer. Four Barn Owl nests were reported, about typical. Even with all of the work on the Breeding Bird Atlas, only a few each of several woodland warblers (Worm-eating, Hooded, Cerulean) were reported, continuing a pattern of recent years.

Range Extensions

Several species showed evidence of range changes in Iowa this summer. Both Northern Bobwhite and Carolina Wren, species whose ranges typically retract southward during severe winters and expand after a mild winter, were in the expansion mode this year after several severe winters. Last year, I commented on the apparent range expansion by Blue Grosbeaks and in particular their appearance at the Hawkeye Wildlife Area (Dinsmore 2011). This year Blue Grosbeaks were back at that area, suggesting that the 2011 influx was not a fluke. In addition, Blue Grosbeaks were found in numerous areas east of their normal western Iowa range. Is a more permanent range expansion going on for this species? Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were found in Des Moines County, south of their usual Iowa range, and a nest was found in Boone County, the southernmost sapsucker nesting record for Iowa.

Migrants

A few late migrant passerines (three species of flycatchers, one thrush, and five warblers) were found in early June, typical of recent years. An unusually diverse variety of late shorebirds including at least 15 migrant species was found in early June. These included Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, American Avocet, Hudsonian Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Red-necked Phalarope, species which typically have moved north by then. Overall, it was a great summer for migrant shorebirds with 24 species found. Migrant shorebirds appeared to be present almost continuously throughout the period with perhaps only a very brief break from about 16–20 June between the end of spring migration and the start of fall migration (Jim Forde, pers. comm.).

Early southbound arrivals included the usual American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, Ring-billed Gulls, Black Tern, Forster's Terns, and numerous shorebirds. The only early passerines reported were an Alder Flycatcher and perhaps several Least Flycatchers.

Red Crossbills appeared in Iowa this summer for the first time since 2008. Not strictly a migration, this irruption was widespread and seems to involve many birds moving east. At least some Red Crossbills in neighboring states have been identified as Type 3 (of about 10 known types). Those crossbills are found in hemlock forests in the Pacific Northwest, suggesting a source for the Iowa birds; this was confirmed by recordings taken in fall 2012 (SJD, pers. comm.).

Unusual Species

One Accidental species and four Casual species were found this summer. The Accidental species, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, made a brief appearance at Forney Lake. The Casual species were Neotropic Cormorant (three records), King Rail, California Gull, and Lazuli Bunting (two records). A number of other somewhat unusual species were also seen. These included Ross's Goose, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, White-faced Ibis, Swainson's Hawk, American Avocet, Hudsonian Godwit, Western Sandpiper, Laughing Gull, Short-eared Owl, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Accidental or Casual species, * = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **alt** = alternate (plumage), **A** = area, **BBS** = breeding bird survey, **imm** = immature, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **se half** = diagonal se half, **SF** = state forest, **Sl** = slough, **SP** = state park, **WA** = wildlife area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: shading = species reported in county. In most cases, the species was probably nesting in the county although evidence was presented only in a few cases.

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK: Six were found 17, 18 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (*WRS, *KDy, *POR-ph – see note in this issue), the second record of this species for Iowa. The previous record was in 1994.

Greater White-fronted Goose: All: one 27 Jun at Kiowa M *Sac* (TLu) and one 5 Jul near Wesley *Kossuth* (Harry Eischen fide MCK).

Snow Goose: Nine reports, mostly of one or 2 birds, from Sandhills L *Woodbury* (GLV), Jewell *Hamilton* (SJD), Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), Big Creek L *Polk* (SJD), Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD, JS), Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (SJD), *Carroll* (SJD), and Port Neal *Woodbury* (SJD, TLu, GLV). Most: 23 on 23 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (JS).

Ross's Goose: One 14 Jul in *Carroll* (SJD) was Iowa's fifth summer record.

Mute Swan: All: 2 on 23, 25 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

Trumpeter Swan: Broods were reported at Silver L *Dickinson* (LAS), Forney L *Fremont* (KDy), and Bob Pyle M *Story* (SJD). After a great year in 2011 with more than 40 nests, this year's dry conditions probably led to poorer nest success. Earlier this year, the Iowa DNR released 4 swans each at Rapp P *Page* and Riverton WA *Page*.

Gadwall: All: a brood 22 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD, TMH), a brood 27 Jun at Goose L *Clinton* (SJD), 2 on 29 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (TLu), and one 16 Jul at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF).

American Wigeon: All: one male 22 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD, TMH).

Northern Shoveler: All: 2 males 15 Jun, 1 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), one 17 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), 3 on 21 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), and one male 29 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

Northern Pintail: All: one 1 Jun at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV), 2 males 15 Jun, 1 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), a male 21 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), a male 23 Jun, 12 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and an ad and 4 yg 5 Jul at Rush L *Osceola* (LAS).

Green-winged Teal: All: one 9 Jun at Errington M *Polk* (DTh), a male 21 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), a male and female



Gray Partridge brood, Wright, 17 July 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

22, 25 June at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), 3 on 26 Jun at Poole SI Allamakee (DK), one 27 Jun at Cardinal M Winneshiek (DK), a male 10 Jul at Little Clear L Pocahontas (SJD), and a male 17 Jul at Lower Morse L Wright (SJD).

Canvasback: All: a male 3 Jun at Hawkeye WA Johnson (MHB).

Redhead: All: one 12 Jun in Pocahontas (SJD), 2 on 12 Jun at Spring Run A Dickinson (SJD), a female 26 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), a brood 28 Jun at Hottes L Dickinson (SJD), a brood 9 Jul at Coulter M Franklin (SJD), and a female and 3 yg 19 Jul at Diamond L Dickinson (SJD).

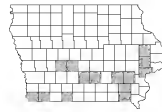
Ring-necked Duck: Other than 6–8 on 5–23 Jun at Forney L Fremont (MP, KDy, JS), all singles: at Ventura M Cerro Gordo (PH), near Jewell Hamilton (SJD), at L Macbride Johnson (JF), at Diamond L Dickinson (SJD), and at Otter Creek M Tama (SJD, JF).

Lesser Scaup: All: a female 26 Jun at Red Rock Res. Marion (SJD), a female 1 Jul at Sand L Johnson (MHB), and one 22 Jul at L Macbride Johnson (JF).

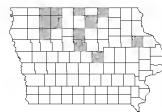
Hooded Merganser: Broods were reported 10 Jun at Ketelsen M Story (Steve Lekwa fide HZ), 22 Jun at Twin Ponds P Chickasaw (MP), 27 Jun at Kiowa M Sac (TLu), 7 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (LAS), and 14 Jul at Mulroney RA Palo Alto (TLu).

Ruddy Duck: Often a late migrant and wanderer in summer, 1–6 were found in Cerro Gordo, Fremont, Hamilton, Hancock, Johnson, and Polk (PH, MP, SJD, JF). The only evidence of nesting was 2 broods 19 Jul at Diamond L Dickinson (SJD).

Northern Bobwhite: Bobwhite seemed to have had a good summer, probably in large part due to the relatively mild winter. Reports came from 14 counties, north to Jones but mostly in the s half of Iowa (m.ob.), similar to where they were found in 2011. August roadside counts showed a modest increase in their numbers compared to 2011 (Iowa DNR).



Gray Partridge: Reports came from 12 counties, mainly in nc and nw Iowa in the same areas where they were found in 2011. A female with a brood 22 Jul near Hopkinton Delaware (BSc) was east of its usual range. August roadside counts were up 21% from 2011 (Iowa DNR).



Ring-necked Pheasant: Weather conditions this past winter and spring provided the best conditions for pheasant nesting since 2003 (Iowa DNR). Numerous pheasants and pheasant broods were reported



Pied-billed Grebe, Big Wall L, Wright, 22 June 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

from throughout Iowa this summer, a dramatic change from recent years. August roadside counts were up 16% from 2011 (Iowa DNR).

Greater Prairie-Chicken: At Kellerton Grasslands Ringgold there were two broods (SSh) and 2 birds 30 Jul (SJD). This spring the Iowa DNR released 47 birds from Nebraska at or near Kellerton WA in an attempt to rejuvenate the population.

Common Loon: All: 2 (basic) on 8 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA Linn (JF), 2 on 12 Jun and one 28 Jun at Spirit L Dickinson (SJD), one (basic) 25 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (JF), one 3 Jul at Fertile Worth (RG), and one 23 Jul at Spirit L Dickinson (LAS).

Pied-billed Grebe: Few reports. Nine broods 19 Jul at Diamond L Dickinson (SJD) were the most.

Red-necked Grebe: All: one 5 Jul near Silver L Worth (RG) and 2 ad and 2 yg 28 Jun at Diamond L Dickinson (SJD).

Eared Grebe: All: 2 on 2 Jun at the Clarence sewage ponds Cedar (CRE) were carryovers from spring (Kenne 2012).

Western Grebe: All: one 20 Jul at Prairie L Dickinson (LAS).

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT: All: an ad and nest 27 Jun on the Clinton spoil

islands (SJD-ph, TMH – see note in this issue), one worn ad 6 Jul at L Rathbun in Wayne and Appanoose (SJD), and 2 sub-adults 21 Jul at New L Woodbury (*TLu, *POR-ph, BFH-details).

Double-crested Cormorant: Three nesting colonies were reported; about 700 adults, 760 young, and 118 nests on 27 Jun on the Clinton spoil islands (SJD, TMH), some nesting birds among the 200 on 11 Jul at High L Emmet (TLu), and 6 nests found in November at Crystal L Hancock (SJD). A few were found elsewhere with 79 on 6 Jul at L Rathbun Appanoose (SJD) and 51 on 31 Jul at Rice L Worth (PH) the most.

American White Pelican: The colony on the Clinton spoil islands had 1280 adults, 860 chicks, and 178 nests on 27 Jun (SJD, TMH). Mid-summer flocks were 120 on 23 Jun at Forney L Fremont (JS), 687 on 23 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), and 200 on 1 Jul at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), more than in 2011. The 1800 on 19 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (SJD) were the most.

Least Bittern: All: 6 on 17 Jun at Forney L Fremont (KDY), 7 on 22 Jun at Big Wall L Wright (SJD), one 27 Jul along the Winnebago R Cerro Gordo (PH), and one 29 Jul at Spirit L Dickinson (ETH).

Great Blue Heron: The only large post-breeding concentrations reported were 123 on 23 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD) and 72 on 10 Jul at Blue L Monona (SJD).

Great Egret: The 350 adults and 310 nests 27 Jun on the Clinton spoil islands (SJD, TMH) were by far the most reported. Besides 33 on 23 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), from 1–11 were found in Dickinson, Fremont, Palo Alto, Polk, Story, Tama, Wayne, and Woodbury (m.ob.).

Snowy Egret: All: one ad 6 Jul at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD-details) and one 27 Jul at Goose L Kossuth (JN-details).



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, n of Mason City, Cerro Gordo, 27 July 2012. Photograph by Bruce G. McKee, Mason City, IA.

Little Blue Heron: All: one juv 13 Jul at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF).

Cattle Egret: The only nesting record was 16 adults and a nest 27 Jun at the *Clinton* spoil islands (SJD, TMH) where they nested in 2010. Other records were one 19 Jun at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), one 23 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD), 2 on 24 Jun at Forney L Fremont (KDy), and 2 on 22 Jul near Ames Story (HZ).

Green Heron: Up to 5 were found in Buena Vista, Cedar, Cerro Gordo, Jones, Polk, Story, Washington, Winneshiek, and Woodbury (m.ob.), typifying its low density, statewide distribution.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Most: 35 on 17 Jun at Forney L Fremont (KDy). Elsewhere singles were at Otter Creek M

Tama 26 Jun (JF), the *Clinton* spoil islands 27 Jun (SJD, TMH), and Rush L *Osceola* 5 Jul (LAS).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: More reports than usual: up to 2 adults and 1 subadult 5 Jun–1 Jul at the Iowa Arboretum Boone (PS, SJD, TMH, DCH, LGD, WO), 2 subadults 24 Jun at Banner Wetland Warren (JS), 2 adults, 6 second- year, and 3 subadults 29 Jun at Forney L Fremont (KDy), one 30 Jun at Chichaqua WA Polk (AB), one juv 27, 30 Jul n of Mason City Cerro Gordo (PH, RG), and 2 juv from 27–31 Jul along the Winnebago R Cerro Gordo (PH).

White-faced Ibis: All: 7 on 5 Jun at Forney L Fremont (MP) and an ad 23 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD-details).

Plegadis species: One 13 Jun at Union Slough NWR Kossuth (*JN).

Turkey Vulture: Vultures continue to do well in Iowa. The only mention of nesting was 2 downy yg 21 Jul in a granary in rural Howard (LR). Large groups were 65 on 4 Jun at Rock Creek SP Jasper (MP) and 150 on 27 Jul at Lake Ahquabi SP Warren (JS).

Osprey: This year, 17 pairs had 14 successful nests and produced 27 young, one of the most successful years yet. Nests were in *Black Hawk*, Boone, Dickinson, Johnson, Linn, Monona, Polk, and Woodbury. In addition, 14 young Ospreys from Minnesota and Wisconsin were released in Carroll (4), Dubuque (5), and Warren (5)(PSc). Away from the nesting sites, singles were noted in Appanoose, Fremont, Marshall, Polk, and Story (RLC, KDy, MP, DTh, WO).

Mississippi Kite: All: in the Des Moines area, 3 were there 9 Jun (JS) and singles there 19 Jun, 21 Jun, and 14 Jul (JWR, MP, DTh). Elsewhere, singles were 25 Jun in Ames Story (SJD-ph) and 7 Jul in Ottumwa Wapello (SJD). A fledgling, apparently from a nearby nest, was found on or about 24 Jul in Urbandale Polk and turned over to Kay



Cooper's Hawk, Iowa City, Johnson, 31 July 2012. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.

Neumann at SOAR for rehabilitation (fide SJD). The bird was released in September at Whiterock Conservancy Guthrie.

Bald Eagle: The eagle nesting population continued to do well with an estimated 275 active nests. The number of counties with eagle nests remains at 92 (SSh).

Northern Harrier: All: adults with a fledgling were found 29 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (SJD), and 12, 24 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* (TLu, SJD). Singles were at Hayden Prairie *Howard* (DK), Twelve Mile Lake WA *Emmet* (TLu), West Fork WA *Palo Alto* (TLu), Lower Morse L *Wright* (SJD), Gordon's M *Hamilton* (SJD, TMH), and Anderson Prairie *Emmet* (DTh).

Cooper's Hawk: From 1–3 were in Appanoose, Buena Vista, Fremont, Harrison, Johnson, Keokuk, Marshall, Mills, Plymouth, Polk, Story, Van Buren, Washington, and Woodbury (m.ob.). Most probably were nesting.

Red-shouldered Hawk: All: singles 3 Jun at Skunk River WA *Keokuk* (CJC), 25 Jun, 7 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE, SJD), 7 Jul in Yellow River F *Allamakee* (CRE), and 10 Jul in Loess Hills SF *Monona* (SJD).

Broad-winged Hawk: All: a nest with 3 yg 25 Jun at Saylorville WA *Dallas* (SJD), and singles 2 Jun at Berry's Woods *Warren* (JS), 4 Jun at Camp Creek *Fremont* (TLu), 5 Jun at Jester P *Polk* (MP), 7 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (MP), 13 Jun in Ames *Story* (PS), 15 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (CRE), and 28 Jun, 17 Jul in Des Moines *Polk* (JB).

Swainson's Hawk: All: one 17 Jul at Lower Morse L *Wright* (SJD) and an ad 27 Jul in n *Mitchell* (PH).

KING RAIL: All: an ad and 2 yg 27 Jun at Goose L *Clinton* (SJD).

Virginia Rail: All: one 7 Jul at Yager Sl *Dickinson* (TLu) and one 9 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD).

Sora: All: an ad and 2 yg 24 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Clay* (SJD).

Common Gallinule: All: 14 plus two nests with eggs and two broods 21 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), 3 adults and a brood 10 Jul at Blue L *Monona* (SJD), and as many as 4 at Forney L *Fremont* 5 Jun–21 Jun (MP, KDy, TLu) and a chick there 6 Jul (KDy).

American Coot: The only reports of nesting were 7 Jul at Center Lake WPA *Dickinson* (TLu) and 17 adults and 8 broods 19 Jul at Diamond L *Dickinson* (SJD). The 54 adults 22 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* showed no sign of nesting (SJD).

Sandhill Crane: I received five reports of a pair with a colt: Goose L *Clinton* (SJD), Anderson L *Hamilton* (SJD), Otter Creek M *Tama* (Tom Smith fide SJD), Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC), and Princeton WA *Scott* (SJD), and six more of a pair: Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (JB), Fuller-Green Valley *Keokuk* (CRE), Chichaqua WA *Polk* (DTh, AB), Forney L *Fremont* (KDy), Big Mill Creek *Jackson* (WMZ), and Green Island WA *Jackson* (WMZ). The 27 on 27 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD) was the most.

Black-bellied Plover: All: one 1 Jun

at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (PH) and three reports from Hawkeye WA *Johnson*; 4 on 1 Jun (JF, LGR), 2 there 5 Jun (JF), and one 11 Jun (JF).

American Golden-Plover: All: one 1 Jun and 2 on 3 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), one 10 Jul at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), one 12 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 4 on 21 Jul at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (TLu).

Semipalmated Plover: Last: 15 on 1 Jun at Ventura M *Hancock* (PH) and one 3 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). The first southbound were singles 29 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (SJD) and 8 Jul at Fallow M *Palo Alto* (LAS). The 18 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD) were the most.

Piping Plover: One 5 Jun at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* (MP) was the only report.

Killdeer: Concentrations of post-breeding birds continued to attract attention with 281 on 27 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD), 292 on 14 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), and 944 on 24 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* (SJD). By far the most were 2743 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD).

American Avocet: More reports than usual. One 1–5 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, MHB), one 5 Jun at Nellen Road M *Mills* (MP), 3 on 9 Jun at Sand L *Marshall* (MP)[record latest], 3 on 21 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF)[record earliest], one 1 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), one 6 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 8 on 7 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 3 on 19 Jul at Luton WMA *Woodbury* (TLu), 2 on 21 Jul at Port Neal *Woodbury* (TLu, GLV), 8 on 23 Jul at L *Macbride Johnson* (JF), and 3 on 25 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

Spotted Sandpiper: Broods were found in *Johnson* and *Union* (CJC, SJD). The 53 on 19 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD) seems to be a record high count for Iowa.

Solitary Sandpiper: First: one 27 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD). Concentrations included 32 on 14 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), 46 on 19 Jul at Mud L *Clay* (SJD), 10 on 22 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 48 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD).

Greater Yellowlegs: First: one 27 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD) and one 28 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (SJD). The most was 6 on 19 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD). One 17 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (KDy) could have been heading north or south.

Willet: All: one 21, 29 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 3 on 29 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (TLu), and one 19 Jul at Big Creek L *Polk* (Scott Rolfes fide SJD).

Lesser Yellowlegs: Last: one 6 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). First: 3 on 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD). The 100 on 29 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (TLu) was the first big flock. The most were 435 on 19 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD) and 200 on 29 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

Upland Sandpiper: Reported from 18 counties in all but ne Iowa (m.ob.). Broods or other confirmed evidence of nesting was noted in *Clay*, *Crawford*, *Lyon*, *Palo Alto*, and *Wright* (TLu, SJD).



Hudsonian Godwit: All: one 1 Jun (JF, LGR) and 5 Jun (JF) at Hawkeye WA *Johnson*.

Marbled Godwit: All: 12 on 29 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (TLu).

Ruddy Turnstone: All: 10 on 1 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, LGR) dwindled to one there 7 Jun (JF). The only southbound bird was one 21 Jul at Port Neal *Woodbury* (TLu, GLV).

Sanderling: Late spring birds were 3 on 1 Jun, 5 on 2 Jun and 3 on 3 Jun at

Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, LGR). The only southbound birds were at Trumbull L *Clay*; 4 on 19 Jul, and 9 on 24 Jul (SJD).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Late spring birds were 97 at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* and 1600 at Ventura M *Cerro Gordo*, both 1 Jun (PH), and one 18 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Five 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) seem to have been the first southbound birds, and Trumbull L *Clay* had the most with 570 on 24 Jul (SJD).

Western Sandpiper: All: 3 adults 27 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF-ph).

Least Sandpiper: Last: 1400 at Ventura M *Cerro Gordo* and 48 at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock*, both on 1 Jun (PH). The first southbound birds were singles 21 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF)[record earliest] and 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD). Large groups included 258 on 14 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD) and 986 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Late northbound birds included 145 at Crystal Hills WA *Winnebago* on 1 Jun (PH) and 2 on 18 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Singles 21 Jun near Galt *Wright* (SJD) and 30 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) may have been late, summering, or early while one 20 Jul at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF)[record earliest] was the first clearly southbound bird.

Baird's Sandpiper: All: 9 on 1 Jun at Ventura M *Cerro Gordo* (PH) were late. Southbound birds were one 14 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD) and 14 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Counts of 400 at Ventura M *Cerro Gordo* and 194 at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* on 1 Jun (PH) were high for early June. One 15 Jun and 8 on 18 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 7 on 17 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD) could have been heading north or south. Fifty on 15 Jul at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (JB) was the

first large group of southbound birds but was soon eclipsed by an amazing 5570 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD). Elsewhere, 1450 on 24 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* (SJD), 200 on 29 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 260 on 31 Jul at Silver L *Worth* (PH) indicated that it was a good summer for this species.

Dunlin: All: 5 on 1 Jun at Ventura M *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and one 3 Jun and 2 on 7 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

Stilt Sandpiper: Southbound migration was fairly typical with 18 on 14 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), 11 on 22 Jul at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH), 21 on 29 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 19 on 29 Jul Diehl's Wetland *Warren* (JS). The 698 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD) is the highest Iowa count since 1963.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: First: one 19 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD)[third earliest], one 24 Jul at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), and 2 on 24 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* (SJD). Most: 7 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD).

Short-billed Dowitcher: All: one 29 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF)[second earliest], one 7 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 3 on 8 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 13 on 12 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 2 on 29 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

Long-billed Dowitcher: One (alt) 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD-details) was the only report.

Wilson's Snipe: All: one 17 Jun at Diehl's Wetland *Warren* (JS).

American Woodcock: All: singles 6 Jun at Riverton A *Fremont* (MP), 7 Jul in *Cedar* (CJC), and 21 Jul at Anderson Prairie *Emmet* (DTh).

Wilson's Phalarope: All: one 1, 5 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). a juv 14 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), a juv 16 Jul in



Caspian Tern, Saylorville Res, Polk, 27 July 2012. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.

Boone (SJD), and 14 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD).

Red-necked Phalarope: All: 6 on 1 Jun at Ventura M *Cerro Gordo* (PH) were late and the first June record since 1998. Southbound birds were 2 adults 19 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD) [ties record earliest] and a male 27 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

Laughing Gull: All: an ad 23, 25 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (*SJD, JF-ph).

Franklin's Gull: As usual, a few were found scattered across the state: 2 on 5 Jun at Jester P *Polk* (MP), one 27 Jun at the *Clinton* spoil islands (SJD, TMH), 3 on 29 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (TLu), and one 22 Jul at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH). The largest groups were 400 on 19 Jul at Spring Run WA *Dickinson* (SJD), 400 on 19 Jul at the Spirit Lake landfill *Dickinson* (SJD), and 250 on 31 Jul at Rice L *Worth* (PH).

Ring-billed Gull: The colony at Meinking M *Dickinson* had 472 adults, 151 chicks and 24 active nests 12 Jun (SJD). Another colony that has been on the *Clinton* spoil islands apparently moved to a nearby island in Illinois this year (SJD, TMH). Summering birds were mostly at Red Rock Res and Saylorville Res but the 300 on 6 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* and 122 on 8 Jul

at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) probably also included some early migrants.

CALIFORNIA GULL: One (second cycle) 25 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF-ph) is the third summer record for Iowa.

Herring Gull: All: one (third alt) 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 2 adults, 2 large chicks, and a third alt bird 27 Jun on the *Clinton* spoil islands (SJD-ph, TMH), and an ad 3 Jul at Sabula *Jackson* (WMZ). The young in *Clinton* represented Iowa's second nesting record of this species.

Least Tern: Three 1, 5 Jun at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* (KDY, MP) and one (alt) 22 Jul at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH) were the only reports from nesting sites. Others were one at Forney L *Fremont* 21 Jun (TLu), one 5, 25 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF-ph), one 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 2 on 30 Jul at Diehl's Wetland *Warren* (JS).

Caspian Tern: Most reports were from the major reservoirs: 5 on 3 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 4 on 15 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* and 9 there 23 Jun (SJD), 4 on 22 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (JS), 16 on 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 10 on 28 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), one 29 Jun at Storm L *Buena Vista* (TLu), and 3 on 6 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

Black Tern: Northbound birds included 55 on 3 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS) and 25 on 18 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (JWR). Nesting reports included a colony 7 Jul at Dugout Creek *Dickinson* (TLu), a nest 9 Jul at Four Mile Lake WPA *Emmet* (TLu), and 4 adults tending yg 19 Jul at Diamond L *Dickinson* (SJD). Four 21 Jul at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (TLu) and 24 on 22 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) probably were southbound.

Common Tern: A molting ad 15 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-ph) was the only report.



*Trumpeter Swan with brood, Yager Sl,
Dickinson, 19 June 2012. Photograph by
Tyler M. Harms, Ames, IA.*



*Northern Bobwhite, Ringgold, 18 June
2012. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux
City, IA.*



*Ring-necked Pheasant,
Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 7
June 2012. Photograph by Jim
Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

*Great Egret, Pool 13,
Clinton, 27 June 2012.
Photograph by Tyler M.
Harms, Ames, IA.*





Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Iowa Arboretum, Boone, 27 June 2012. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



Turkey Vulture, Des Moines, Polk, 11 June 2012. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.

Barn Owls near nest, Ida, 4 July 2012. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



Semipalmated Sandpipers, Hawk-eye WA, Johnson, 3 June 2012. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

*Eastern Kingbird fledgling,
Homestead, Iowa, 17 June 2012.
Photograph by Jim Scheib,
Iowa City, IA.*



Cliff Swallows, Page, 28 July 2012. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.



Carolina Wren, Boone, 30 July 2012. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



Eastern Bluebird, Iowa City, Johnson, 29 June 2012. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.



Henslow's Sparrow, Masterson WA, Hamilton, 16 July 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Lazuli Bunting, Appanoose, 8 July 2012. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



Bobolink, Fremont, 3 June 2012. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



Orchard Oriole, Boone, 13 July 2012. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

Forster's Tern: For the fifth consecutive year, no one found any evidence of nesting. Two 12 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD), 3 on 29 Jun at East Twin L *Hancock* (SJD), and one 29 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD) were in potential nesting areas. Two 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), 2 on 27 Jun in *Jackson* (SJD), 11 on 21 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB), and one 22 Jul at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH) likely were southbound.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Now that this species has reached every Iowa county, few observers mention it. It would be interesting to know if it is now occupying farmsteads in open farm country, away from the small towns that have been its historic stronghold in Iowa.

White-winged Dove: All: up to 6 throughout the season at Keith Dyche's home in Shenandoah *Page*. Two pairs were present.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Up to 3 were found in 20 counties scattered across much of Iowa (m.ob.).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Other than 2 on 1 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), all reports were singles: 1 Jun at Haysville Bend *Keokuk* (BSc), 17 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC), 18 Jun at Burr Oak L *Emmet* (TMH), 6 Jul in *Wayne* (SJD), 16 Jul in *Hamilton* (SJD), and 25 Jul at A.A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK). This species seems to be harder to find than it was a decade or two ago, even with the intensive atlas field work this summer.

Barn Owl: Nests were reported from *Carroll*, *Ida*, *Van Buren*, and *Washington* (BEh, *DoP-ph, SJD), and territorial birds noted in *Decatur*, *Tama*, and *Taylor* may have nested (BEh). A bird was heard repeatedly in *Dallas* (BEh) making a total of eight reports.

Eastern Screech-Owl: Two broods of this secretive species were reported, 2 fledg-

lings 23 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD) and a family group of 6 on 26 Jun at North Liberty *Johnson* (CJC).

Short-eared Owl: One 24 Jul at White-tail Flats *Palo Alto* (SJD) is the first summer record since 2009.

Chuck-will's-widow: All: 3 on 4 Jun, one 17 Jun, and one 6 Jul at the Lucas Unit *Lucas* (PS, JWR, SJD); 2 on 9 Jul at Green Hollow Rd *Fremont* (KDY), and 13 Jun in *s Henry* (WMZ).

Eastern Whip-poor-will: With 8 on 12 Jun in *Van Buren* (WMZ) and 8 on 9 Jul near L Rathbun *Appanoose* (RLC), this species seems to still be common in parts of Iowa. Elsewhere, birds were found in the Lucas Unit *Lucas* (PS), near Forney L *Fremont* (KDY), near Ledges SP *Boone* (LGD), and at Indian Bluffs WMA *Jones* (CJC).

Chimney Swift: Only a few reports. Although concerns have been raised elsewhere, this species seems to be doing reasonably well in Iowa.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Sapsuckers were found in 10 counties south to *Des Moines* (WMZ), one of the southernmost summer records for Iowa. Evidence of nesting included adults feeding yg in nest 7 Jun at the Iowa Arboretum *Boone* (TMH), an active nest 16 Jun at Five Ridge Prairie *Plymouth* (TLu), an ad with a fledgling 27 Jun in *Jackson* (SJD), 2 pairs, each with a yg bird 29 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (SJD), an ad with a yg bird 19 Jul in Little Sioux P *Woodbury* (TMH), and nests at Decorah and Burr Oak *Winneshiek* (DC). The *Boone* nesting record is the southernmost I am aware of for Iowa.

Pileated Woodpecker: With reports from 18 counties mainly in the e half of Iowa (m.ob.), this species seems to be doing well.

Peregrine Falcon: Peregrines had a



great year with 15 active territories and 13 successful nests producing 34 young. Of special interest were two nests on natural cliffs in *Allamakee* that produced 8 young (PSc).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Late migrants were 2 on 1 Jun in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), one 2, 3 Jun at Grammer Grove P *Marshall* (MP), and one 3 Jun at Mini-Wakan SP *Dickinson* (LAS).

Acadian Flycatcher: A few were found in *Allamakee*, *Appanoose*, *Cedar*, *Davis*, *Iowa*, *Jackson*, *Jones*, *Keokuk*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Pottawatamie*, *Story*, *Van Buren*, *Washington*, and *Webster* (m.ob.), all in roughly the se half of Iowa where it typically is found. Singles 11 Jun in Buena Vista (TLu) and 11 Jul in *Emmet* (TLu) were nw of that range.

Alder Flycatcher: Late migrants were singles 1 Jun at Haysville Bend WA *Keokuk* (BSc), 1 Jun in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), 4 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), and 16–17 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). One calling 18 Jul at Bauer Sl *Hamilton* (TMH-details) was Iowa's second July record.

Willow Flycatcher: One or 2 were found in 18 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.).

Least Flycatcher: The last north-bound migrants were on 1 Jun: 3 at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK) and 2 in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH). There were more mid-summer birds than usual this year: one 29 Jun near Lime Creek Nat Ctr *Cerro Gordo* (SJD), one 6 Jul at Hawk Valley WA *Clay* (TLu), 4 on 7 Jul at Buffalo Creek P *Linn* (BSc), a pair with 2 yg 10 Jul at West Swan L *Emmet* (TLu), and an ad and fledgling 24 Jul at Lower Morse L *Wright* (SJD). Singles 24 Jul in *Kossuth* (MCK) and *Clay* (SJD), and 25 Jul in *Story* (WO) may have summered or were early migrants.

Western Kingbird: As expected birds

were found in *Fremont*, *Plymouth*, *Pottawatamie*, and *Woodbury* in w Iowa (TLu, GLV, TMH). Eleven nests, mostly on utility poles, were found in *Shenandoah* *Page* (KDy). Kingbirds continued to occupy their outpost in *Polk* (JB, DTh), a pair made a brief appearance 15–20 Jun in *Ames* *Story* (SJD, PS), and one was farther east in *Des Moines* 21 Jun (*JWR).

Loggerhead Shrike: Broods were seen 6 Jul in *Wayne* (SJD) and 30 Jul in *Cerro Gordo* (RG). One or 2 were found in *Fremont* (TLu), *Ida* (TMH), *Marion* (SJD), *Ringgold* (SJD), *Warren* (JS), and *Woodbury* (BFH, TMH).

White-eyed Vireo: All: one 7, 25 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (MP, CRE), 2 on 7 Jun, 3 on 25 Jun, and 4 on 7 Jul at the Croton Unit *Lee* (MP, CRE, SJD), one 8 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF), one 9 Jun at Ledges SP *Boone* (JS), one 15 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (CRE), one 21 Jun at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (TLu), a pair with a fledgling 6 Jul at Lucas Unit *Lucas* (SJD), one 7 Jul near Heron Bend *Lee* (SJD), and one in n *Polk* all summer (DK).

Bell's Vireo: Up to 4 were found in *Cedar*, *Clinton*, *Davis*, *Fremont*, *Grundy*, *Hamilton*, *Ida*, *Iowa*, *Jasper*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Keokuk*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Marion*, *Muscatine*, *Page*, *Polk*, *Story*, *Van Buren*, *Warren*, *Washington*, *Wayne*, and *Webster* (m.ob.), mostly in the se quarter of Iowa.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Few reports, mostly from e Iowa. One 23 Jun at Oak Ridge Cons A *Woodbury* (BFH) was near the edge of its Iowa range.

Red-eyed Vireo: Few people mentioned this species but apparently it is still reasonably easy to find in suitable habitat.

Black-billed Magpie: All: one 26 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (POR-ph) and one at a nest there 10 Jul (SJD).

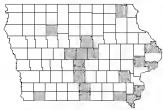
Bank Swallow: The only large post-

breeding concentration reported was 400 on 24 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (SJD).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: All: an imm 28 Jul in Davenport Scott (WMZ).

Brown Creeper: All: 2 on 11 Jun, 5 Jul at Buena Vista Co P Buena Vista (TLu) may have nested.

Carolina Wren: After the mild winter, this species was more widespread than in recent years with reports from 18 counties. Most were in the s half of Iowa (m.ob.) but reports were north to Pocahontas and Winneshiek (TLu, MP).



Sedge Wren: Although more common in n Iowa, reports of 26 on 30 Jul at Kellerton Grasslands Ringgold (SJD), at least 15 males 26 Jul around L Sugema Van Buren (WMZ), and birds elsewhere south of L Sugema Van Buren and in nw Davis, all in July (WMZ) indicate that it is reasonably common south to the Missouri border.

Marsh Wren: Few reports. The 15 found 22 Jun at Big Wall L Wright (SJD) and 35 on 7 Jul at Forney L Fremont (KDi) are typical of its abundance in good habitat.

Veery: Most: 5 singing males 9 Jun at Holst SF Boone (JS). Elsewhere, one 1 Jun at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (PH), one 2 Jun at Grammer Grove P Marshall (MP), and 2 on 26 Jun in Yellow River SF Allamakee (DK).

Swainson's Thrush: All: one 1 Jun in Pilot Knob SP Hancock (PH).

Wood Thrush: From 1–4 were found in 22 counties covering all except n-cen Iowa (m.ob.).

Northern Mockingbird: Up to 4 were found in Appanoose, Dallas, Fremont, Johnson, Jones, Lee, Page, Polk, Van Buren, and Woodbury (m.ob.). Two adults and a yg bird were found 30 Jul in Ringgold (SJD).

Brown Thrasher: An ad seen feeding an almost grown yg American Robin on 4 Jul in Liscomb Marshall (MP) is a puzzler.



Northern Mockingbird, Ringgold, 30 July 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

Cedar Waxwing: A few were found in Appanoose, Cedar, Jefferson, Keokuk, Washington, and Woodbury (RLC, CJC, BFH), typical of its statewide but dispersed distribution. The 75 reported 27 Jun in Clinton (SJD) was by far the most.

Ovenbird: From 1–5 were found in 10 counties, mainly in e Iowa (m.ob.) but west to Fremont (MP) and Woodbury (BFH).

Worm-eating Warbler: All: singles 25 Jun (CRE) and 7 Jul (SJD), both at the Croton Unit Lee.

Louisiana Waterthrush: From 1–4 were found in 11 counties, mainly in e Iowa and generally from expected locations (m.ob.). Somewhat surprising were reports



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Woodman Hollow State Preserve, Webster, 9 June 2012. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

from Oak Ridge Cons A Woodbury (BFH), Five Ridge Prairie Plymouth (TLu), and a nest in Loess Hills SF Harrison (TLu), all in far w Iowa.

Blue-winged Warbler: All: 3 on 15 Jun at the Lick Unit *Lee* (CRE), one 7 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (SJD), one 22 Jul at Buz-zard Ridge WA *Jackson* (CRE), and a pair with a fledgling 26 Jul at Saylorville WA *Dallas* (SJD).

Black-and-white Warbler: All: one 1 Jun in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) and a female 15 Jul at Brushy Creek RA *Webster* (SJD).

Prothonotary Warbler: Away from its Mississippi R backwaters stronghold (WMZ, SJD), others were one 3 Jun at Skunk River WA *Keokuk* (CJC), 3 on 17 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC), 4 on 30 Jun at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (AB), and 2 on 7 Jul near Cedar Bluffs *Cedar* (CJC).

Kentucky Warbler: The most individuals were in *Lee*; 11 on 15 Jun at Lick Creek Unit (CRE) and 8 on 7 Jul at Croton Unit (SJD). Elsewhere, up to 5 were found 6 Jun at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (MP), 8 Jun at Coffman Woods *Keokuk* (CRE), 8 Jun at Indian Bluffs WA *Jones* (MP), 9 Jun at Clemmons Creek WA *Washington* (CRE), 15 Jun at Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (CRE), 23 Jun at Smith WA *Pottawattamie* (TLu), 24 Jun at Morris County P *Van Buren* (CRE), and 6 Jul at Lucas Unit *Lucas* (SJD).

Hooded Warbler: All: 2 on 2 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (JF) and 5 there 7 Jul (SJD), and 3 on 2 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (JF) and 2 there 7 Jul (SJD).

American Redstart: From 1–12 were found in *Cedar, Fremont, Hardin, Iowa, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Keokuk, Marshall, Muscatine, Polk, Story, Washington, and Winneshiek* (CJC, MP, RLC, WO). An ad was seen feeding a fledgling 19 Jul in Little Sioux P Woodbury (TMH).

Cerulean Warbler: Other than 3 on 1 Jun in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), all reports were singles: 11 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 15 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (CRE), 21 Jun at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (TLu), 22 Jun at Hanging Rock Woods *Johnson* (JF), and 7 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (CRE). It seems to have been a poor year for this species.

Northern Parula: Most reports were from se Iowa. From 1–5 were in *Fremont, Henry, Jones, Lee, Louisa, Polk, Story, and Van Buren* (m.ob.). A female and a fledgling were found 8 Jul at Jester P *Polk* (SJD).

Magnolia Warbler: All: a male 2 Jun at Grammer Grove P *Marshall* (MP) was late.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: All: 2 on 1 Jun in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) probably were late migrants.

Pine Warbler: All: 3 on 2 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* including a juv (JF), a male

15 Jun at the Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (CRE), and a pair with 2 fledglings 7 Jul at the Donnellson Unit *Lee* (SJD). The only previous nesting record in Iowa was in 2004.

Yellow-throated Warbler: One or 2 were found in *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Polk*, *Story*, and *Van Buren* (CBr, CRE, JB, PS). An ad and one yg were found 25 Jun at Jester P *Polk* (SJD) and 8 Jul at Sugar Bottom RA *Johnson* (CRE).

Wilson's Warbler: A male 1 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO)[ties second latest] was late.

Yellow-breasted Chat: All: one 2 Jun, 15 Jul at Brushy Creek RA *Webster* (DCH, SJD), 2 on 7 Jun, 3 on 25 Jun, and 5 on 7 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (MP, CRE, SJD), 2 on 8 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF), one 10, 30 Jun at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (AB), one 15 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (CRE), one 22 Jun at Twin Ponds P *Chickasaw* (MP), one 25 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE), and one 2 Jul at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BSc). A nest with 4 yg was at Medicine Creek WA *Wayne* 6 Jul (SJD).

Eastern Towhee: Up to 7 were found in *Cedar*, *Hancock*, *Iowa*, *Jefferson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Van Buren*, and *Webster* (CJC, PH, MHB).

Clay-colored Sparrow: All reports were from n Iowa: 4 on 18 Jun at West Fork WA *Palo Alto* (JN), 2 on 23 Jun near Lime Springs *Howard* (LR), one 23 Jun near Kendallville *Winneshiek* (MP), 5 on 7 Jul at Yager Sl *Dickinson* (TLu), one 8 Jul at Fallow M *Palo Alto* (LAS), and 3 on 11 Jul at Twelve Mile L *Emmet* (TLu).

Lark Sparrow: Typical of its spotty distribution, birds were found in ten counties scattered across the state: up to 4 in *Buena Vista*, *Chickasaw*, *Fremont*, *Iowa*, *Jefferson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, and *Mills* (SJD, MP, CJC), 16 on 10 Jul in *Monona* (SJD), and 20 on 26 Jul in *Dallas* (SJD).

Savannah Sparrow: Birds south of their usual Iowa summer range were 6 Jun near L Sugema *Van Buren* (WMZ), 3 on 26 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 26 Jul near Lockridge *Jefferson* (WMZ).

Grasshopper Sparrow: With reports from 15 counties spanning much of Iowa (m.ob.), this species continues to be reasonably common. The most was more than 100 on 14 Jul at West Fork WA *Palo Alto* (TLu).

Henslow's Sparrow: This species is clearly more common than formerly thought. Birds were found in 23 counties in all but far w Iowa (m.ob.). The most was 30 on 6 Jul in *Wayne* (SJD).



Swamp Sparrow: With counts of 12 on 17 Jul at Lower Morris L *Wright* (SJD) and 16 on 21 Jul at Anderson Prairie *Emmet* (DTh), this species continues to be common in suitable habitat in n Iowa. The southernmost reports were from Goose L *Clinton* and Princeton WA *Scott* (SJD).

Summer Tanager: From 1–4 were found in *Appanoose*, *Boone*, *Davis*, *Fremont*, *Lee*, *Marion*, *Polk*, *Pottawattamie*, *Scott*, *Van Buren*, *Warren*, and *Webster* (m.ob.). The most was 12 on 4 Jun at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (TLu), the furthest north was a pair 19 Jun at Dolliver SP *Webster* (SJD), and a brood was found 26 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh).

Scarlet Tanager: Up to 6 were found in *Cedar*, *Chickasaw*, *Fremont*, *Guthrie*, *Hancock*, *Hardin*, *Harrison*, *Iowa*, *Jefferson*, *Jones*, *Lee*, *Marshall*, *Story*, *Van Buren*, *Webster*, *Winneshiek*, and *Woodbury* (m.ob.).

Blue Grosbeak: The number of reports increased dramatically with numerous reports from counties where it typically does not occur. Besides reports from nine counties in or close to its traditional range in the w third of Iowa,



there were reports from Ringgold, Wayne, Davis, Wapello, Warren and Marion in s-cen Iowa and one from Lower Morse L Wright (SJD, WMZ, JS). This year 7-10 different birds were found at the Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), suggesting that last year's influx may be a lasting event. A brood 29 Jul at Anderson Prairie Emmet (DTh) was a bit east of its usual range.

LAZULI BUNTING: A male 28 Jun at Red Rock Res Marion (*DW) and a male 8-20 Jul n of Plano Appanoose (*TJ, RLC-details, *POR- ph) are Iowa's fourth and fifth summer records and the first since 1996.

Dickcissel: Dickcissels seemed to be abundant this year with reports of 40 on 3 Jun in Keokuk (CJC), 50 on 9 Jun in Washington (CJC), and 40 on 29 Jun on a BBS route in Story and Marshall (HZ). More than 40 were found 21 Jun on a BBS route in Winneshiek in ne Iowa (DC) where historically this species is uncommon.

Bobolink: Reported from 20 counties, most in the s half of Iowa including reports from Page, Ringgold, Decatur, Davis, Van Buren, and Lee (MP, SJD, WMZ), all on the Missouri border. The 61 found 30 Jul in Ringgold (SJD) is a large group for s Iowa.

Eastern Meadowlark: Two on 14 Jul at Broken Kettle Grasslands Plymouth (GLV) were in nw Iowa where this species is scarce.

Western Meadowlark: Birds 15 Jun at the Seven Cities Sod Farm Scott (WMZ) and 5 Jul in ne Des Moines (WMZ) were the easternmost reports.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Few reports, all from within the Prairie Pothole region of Iowa (DTh, PS, SJD) except for 10 on 23 Jul at Blue L Monona (GLV) and singles 5 Jun at Forney L Fremont and Nellen Road M Mills (MP).

Great-tailed Grackle: Reports, all in



Dickcissel, Anderson L, Hamilton, 15 July 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



American Goldfinch, Boone, 26 July 2012. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

June, were mostly from established sites: Snake Creek M *Greene* (PS), Forney L *Fremont* (KDy, MP), Goose L *Greene* (SJD), and Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD). Two on 5 Jun at Nellen Road M *Mills* (MP) were from an apparent new site.

Orchard Oriole: Up to 5 were found in *Clinton, Davis, Fremont, Grundy, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Mills, Muscatine, Story, Van Buren, Washington, Webster, and Woodbury* (CJC, WMZ, MP, WO, DCH, TMH), all in the southern two-thirds of Iowa.

Red Crossbill: With five reports, Iowa had its first Red Crossbills in summer since 2008. Reports were 8–10 on 11 Jul in *Ventura Cerro Gordo* (Paulette Lugg fide PH), one juv 28–30 Jul near *Waterman Creek*

O'Brien (BMo-details), and 2 juv 31 Jul in *Ottosen Humboldt* (JN-details). Two singles were reported on the birdline: 14 Jul in *Fort Dodge Webster* (fide TJ) and a juv 18 Jul in *Sioux City Woodbury* (Helen Harvey). All were at feeders and stayed only briefly. Recordings of their call notes are needed be able to identify the call type and the probable source of these summertime strays.

Pine Siskin: All: one 2 Jun in *Mason City Cerro Gordo* (PH).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: Up to 4 were found in *Cedar, Des Moines, Iowa, Johnson, Lee, Linn, Louisa, and Muscatine* (CJC, SJD, MHB, MP, BT), nearly encompassing its known range in Iowa. A brood was found in *Des Moines* (SJD).

COMMENT

As always, this report would not be possible without the contributions of so many people around the state. I received about 1680 reports from 52 individuals, typical of recent summers. I appreciate all of your reports and thank you all. This was the last summer of the Breeding Bird Atlas project, and people who were actively involved with that project made significant contributions to this report. This report covers 172 species, somewhat more than average. An additional 55 species had data reported but were not included in the report, giving a total of 227 species that were present in Iowa this summer. Birding can indeed be good in a hot summer. The American Ornithologists' Union again has changed some bird names and where they appear in species list. The only change that affects this report is their decision to move the falcons from their traditional spot right after the hawks and eagles to after the woodpeckers.

CONTRIBUTORS

Matthew Baumann	MBa	Robins	Stephen J. Dinsmore	SJD	Ames
Ellen Bell	EB	Ridgeway	Keith Dyché	KDy	Shenandoah
John Bissell	JB	Grimes	Chris R. Edwards	CRE	Solon
April Blair	ABl	Humboldt	Bruce Ehresman	BEh	Ames
Aaron Brees	AB	Des Moines	Jim Forde	JF	Cedar Rapids
Christopher Brochu	CBr	Iowa City	Michele Francis	MF	Cedar Rapids
Mark Brown	MHB	Iowa City	Jacob Gilliam	JG	Norwalk
Dennis Carter	DC	Decorah	Rita Goranson	RG	Mason City
Chris Caster	CJC	Coralville	Tyler Harms	TMH	Ames
Raymond L. Cummins	RLC	Centerville	Doug C. Harr	DCH	Ogden
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Darwin Koenig	DK	Ankeny	W. Ross Silcock	WRS	Tabor
Tucker Lutter	TLu	Bronson	Jim Sinclair	JS	Indianola
Bruce A. Morrison	BMo	Hartley	Paul Skrade	PS	Ames
Jacob Newton	JN	Ottosen	Ed Thelen	ETH	Spirit Lake
Wolf Oesterreich	WO	Ames	Dennis Thompson	DTh	Johnston
Don Poggensee	DoP	Ida Grove	Bill Tollefson	BT	Cedar Rapids
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Larry Reis	LR	Calmar	Dan Watkins	DW	Binghamton, NY
Paul Roisen	POR	Sioux City	Hank Zaletel	HZ	Nevada
Linda Rudolph	LGR	Coralville	Walter Zuurdeeg	WMZ	Davenport
John Rutenbeck	JVR	Burlington			

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Neotropic Cormorant nesting at Pool 13, Clinton County

Stephen J. Dinsmore, Mike Griffin, Tyler M. Harms, Ross Ellingson, and Curt Kemmerer

On the morning of 27 June 2012 we were conducting a colonial bird nesting survey of three islands in Pool 13, Clinton County. By approximately 9:30 A.M. we had surveyed two of the islands and landed at Island 306 (Gomer's Island), which had no colonial bird nesting activity in either 2010 or 2011. During our survey, we noted an adult Neotropic Cormorant perched in a dead tree near the north end of the island (Figure 1). The bird allowed close approach, called several times, and seemed hesitant to depart, all of which suggested possible nesting activity. The island contained nesting American White Pelicans (63 active nests and 100 chicks), Double-crested Cormorants (30 active nests and 85 chicks), Great Egrets (137 nests), and Cattle Egrets (16 adults and at least one nest) and seemed like an ideal spot for this species to nest. The bird eventually took flight and repeatedly circled the island, seemingly interested in landing in some shorter trees near the north end. To minimize disturbance, we decided to observe the island at a distance from a boat. It took us a few minutes to launch the boat and circle the island to obtain a good view of the area we thought might



Figure 1. Adult Neotropic Cormorant perched near its nest at Pool 13, Clinton, 27 June 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Figure 2. Adult Neotropic Cormorant on nest at Pool 13, Clinton, 27 June 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

contain the nest. After about 10 minutes of watching the Neotropic Cormorant failed to appear and soon thereafter we found it sitting on a nest (Figure 2). The platform nest contained 4 eggs (Figure 3) and was located approximately 4 m above the ground in a mulberry tree (probably white mulberry [*Morus alba*]). After photographing the nest we quickly departed the area and did not return later to check on its fate.



Figure 3. Neotropic Cormorant nest with 4 eggs at Pool 13, Clinton, 27 June 2012. Photograph by Tyler M. Harms, Ames, IA.

This represents the first confirmed nesting record of a Neotropic Cormorant for Iowa. Since first appearing in Iowa in 1996 (Dinsmore 1997), this species has rapidly increased as a vagrant; records have spanned the period April to November with a peak in April-May. The nearest regular nesting sites are in the Delta region of west-central Mississippi (Hanson et al. 2010). It will be interesting to note whether this expansion continues, and if this species eventually nests in cormorant or wading bird colonies elsewhere in Iowa.

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Fulvous Whistling-Ducks and Mottled Ducks at Forney Lake

W. Ross Silcock

Forney Lake Wildlife Management Area (Forney Lake) occupies an old Missouri River floodplain channel in Fremont County, Iowa. Water level varies widely between and within years, mostly influenced by the floodplain water table. The major flooding in 2011 resulted in very high water levels in Forney Lake in spring 2012, which in turn produced excellent habitat for waterbirds. In this note I describe sightings of two rare waterfowl species in Iowa—Fulvous Whistling-Duck and Mottled Duck. Apart from these sightings, a pair of Trumpeter Swans bred successfully, and at least one pair of Common Gallinules was present into the summer.

On 28 March 2012, in the late afternoon, I checked Forney Lake from the gravel road that passes east-west along the south side of the lake. Waterbirds were abundant, with several hundred each of American White Pelicans and American Coots and a large number of Double-crested Cormorants. Most of the expected “dabbling” duck species were present, along with a few “diver” species. The south side of the lake has several muskrat mounds that are used as loafing places by various waterfowl, and Canada Geese use them as nesting platforms when the water level is high enough to discourage predators. As I drove slowly along the road, I noticed a dark duck sitting at the base of one of the mounds and immediately thought “American Black Duck”. As I studied it through my binoculars it slowly swam away

from the mound and was joined by a second bird. The two continued to swim out a short distance into some emergent rushes. I was able to identify them as a pair of Mottled Ducks. They were too pale to be American Black Ducks, the overall coloration chestnut brown rather than blackish. The throats were essentially unmarked, and a black spot was visible at the base of the bill on each bird. The male had a very bright yellow bill and the female’s was overall greenish with no dark patches as on a female Mallard. There were no white tail feathers, and I was unable to see the speculums because the birds



Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, Forney L, Fremont, 17 June 2012. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.

did not fly. I went to get my camera and notified Shenandoah birder Keith Dyche, who soon arrived. I was able to get recognizable pictures and Keith was able to identify the birds as they continued to swim out into the lake. The Mottled Ducks were later seen by Loren and Babs Padelford of Bellevue, Nebraska.

This represents the third record of a Mottled Duck in Iowa, the two previous records at Saylorville Reservoir in July 2006 (Dinsmore and Brees 2007) and August 2009 (Dinsmore 2009). Mottled Ducks nested at Cheyenne Bottoms in central Kansas 1963-1977, when as many as 12 pairs were present, but there has been no breeding since, likely due to unsuitable water levels (Thompson et al 2011). An adult male banded in March 1968 at Cheyenne Bottoms was recovered December 1969 in coastal Louisiana. There is also an October 1968 record for Nebraska (Sharpe et al 2001).

One 17 June 2012 Keith Dyche and I were attempting to canoe around Forney Lake to see what breeding birds might be present and to make a general check of the area, which was by now becoming choked by emergent vegetation and extensive patches of water-lilies. As we worked our way to the east end of the lake into the rising sun, we flushed a group of six dark-looking birds that we first thought were ibises based on the flight habit of carrying the head lower than the plane of the body. We soon realized, however, that these birds did not have long decurved bills and were not ibises. We immediately thought whistling-ducks and as they circled around behind us into better light we noticed that there were no white wing patches and these were indeed Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. The birds continued westward and landed near the west end of the lake. When we finally worked our way to the area they landed we were unable to find them, nor could we relocate them during our morning circuit of the lake by canoe. Fortunately, Paul Roisen was able to get excellent photos of the birds later in the day as he and Keith Dyche returned to the lake to look for the birds.

This is a rare species on the northern Great Plains, but has a tendency to be widely dispersive. This represents the second accepted record of a Fulvous Whistling-Duck for Iowa. The first record was a single bird at Goose Lake in Clinton County from 17 July to 8 September 1994 (Kent 1995, Johnson 2010). There are fewer than 20 records for Kansas (Thompson et al 2011) and a similar number for Missouri (Robbins and Easterla 1992, pers. obs.), but none for Nebraska (Sharpe et al 2001, pers. obs.).

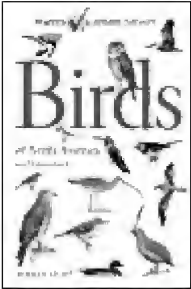
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Book Review

Tyler M. Harms



Birds of North America and Greenland by Norman Arlott. 2011. 239 pages, color photographs, Princeton University Press, Princeton, ISBN 978-0-691-15140-3. \$15.95 (paperback).

Birds of North America and Greenland was published in 2011 as part of the Princeton Illustrated Checklist series. Although this guide has some very appealing features, it is tough to compare to the traditional Sibley or Peterson field guides or even the more recent Crossley guide. This book provides the necessary information for identification and colorful illustrations, all in a compact guide that can easily

fit in the pocket of a field vest.

This is the second Princeton Illustrated Checklist that I own (I also own *Birds of Hawaii, New Zealand, and the Central and West Pacific*) and I must say, if there is one thing that appeals to me the most about these guides it is the size. Unlike the full Sibley or Peterson guides, this guide packs all the birds of North America into a book that can nearly fit in the back pocket of your jeans. The organization of these guides is also very appealing to me. All the species in any particular group fit on just a few pages and the table of contents takes you directly to the group for which you are looking. This makes searching easy because you don't have to flip through several pages when looking for a particular species, and also allows for easy comparisons among species because several species of a group are displayed on a single page. Like the name implies, the species accounts are stacked on each page making it easy to check them off your list and keep a running tally of all species in a group.

As you may have guessed, with the compact size come some disadvantages. The text is rather small and can be difficult to read at times. Although this guide does provide nice illustrations, it certainly does not provide the variety of illustrations that some of the larger, more comprehensive guides deliver, such as illustrations at different viewing angles or of different sexes and ages. My biggest complaint, however, is the size of the distribution maps and their positioning on the page. The distribution maps are too small for my liking, and they are positioned on the very inside of the page near the binding. As a result, I frequently find myself nearly ripping the binding apart just to view the map. Perhaps the book will break in enough that the binding will loosen and make the maps more viewable, but I feel the author could have positioned the maps on the outside of the page to allow for easier viewing.

In summary, this guide certainly puts the “field” in field guide with its compact size and cramped organization, but will not satisfy the role of a reference field guide because it lacks detailed species accounts, large range maps, and variety of photos. If you are looking for a guide to stick in your pocket or keep in the glove box of your car, the *Birds of North America and Greenland* is the way to go.

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Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life

James J. Dinsmore

The December 1962 issue features a lovely colored plate of a Say's Phoebe by E. W. Steffen. This frontispiece is tied directly to the lead article by Eldon Bryant and William Youngworth on Say's Phoebes in western Iowa. Their article describes field work started by the senior author who in 1960 found a Say's Phoebe and its nest near Akron, Iowa. In 1962 Bryant and Youngworth found the species nesting at seven wooden bridges in western Plymouth and Sioux counties, thereby establishing it, at least temporarily, as a nesting bird in Iowa.

A report on the fall 1962 meeting at Ledges State Park indicated that the format for fall meetings was discussed extensively. It was decided that the meetings should be informal, meaning no scientific papers, but should have a planned agenda. Presumably field trips and fellowship were popular themes for fall meetings fifty years ago.

The field notes section, only in its second year, had grown to nearly four pages of contributions although only a few individuals are listed as providing sightings. Among the short notes was one by James Sieh describing a flying immature Bufflehead in Sac County, which confirmed the first nesting record for the species in Iowa, a note on the move of the Sherman Swift tower from National, Iowa to a campground near Harper's Ferry, and a report by Eldon Bryant of a Black Rail in Plymouth County in 1959. Among the obituaries, the deaths of Paul Errington of Iowa State University and Rudolph Anderson were noted. Errington was known mainly for his work on muskrat populations but he also did considerable work on Great Horned Owls and other predators. Anderson did his doctoral work at the University of Iowa on the birds of Iowa and was the author of a 1907 publication that was the first real book on Iowa's birds.

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IOU

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2011

	Dec 31, 11
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1150 Checking - 1st Citizens	14,604.31
1250 Savings - 1st Citizens	1,090.53
Total Checking/Savings	15,694.84
Other Current Assets	
1350 CD - 1st Citizens	50,780.41
Total Other Current Assets	50,780.41
Total Current Assets	66,475.25
TOTAL ASSETS	66,475.25
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Deferred Revenue	340.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	340.00
Total Current Liabilities	340.00
Total Liabilities	340.00
Equity	
3000 General Operating Fund	37,568.04
3300 Memorials	14,271.43
Fund Balances	
3200 Life Membership Fund	8,903.89
3210 Outside Projects Fund	794.60
3400 Publications Fund	5,233.22
Total Fund Balances	14,931.71
Net Income	-635.93
Total Equity	66,135.25
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	66,475.25

IOU
Profit & Loss
January through December 2011

	Jan - Dec 11
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4999 Dues - Next Year	95.00
5200 Meeting Income	8,952.75
5300 Merchandise Sales	1,309.25
5350 Sales - Online	70.81
5450 Silent Auctions	685.00
5500 Breeding Bird Atlas Proj	100.00
5900 Interest Income	472.29
Donations	
5100 Donations - Unspecified	2,758.00
5120 Donations - Memorials	400.00
Total Donations	3,158.00
Dues	
4012 Fledgling Dues	12.00
4020 Goldfinch Dues	3,510.00
4035 Bluebird Dues	3,045.00
4050 Baltimore Oriole Dues	1,500.00
4075 Great Egret Dues	300.00
4100 Osprey Dues	2,000.00
4250 Bald Eagle Dues	500.00
4800 Institutions Dues	750.00
Total Dues	11,617.00
Total Income	26,460.10
Expense	
6200 Meeting Expenses	7,536.53
6600 Insurance-Liability	422.00
6900 Bank & Pay Pal Exp.	185.28
7000 - Other Expense	67.15
Committees	
6708 Committees - Conserv/Proj	5,000.00
Total Committees	5,000.00
Officers	
6840 Officers - Mmbrship Coor	886.43
6842 Officers - President	90.70
Total Officers	977.13
Publications	
6100 Publications - IOU News	3,297.44
6110 Publications - IA Bird Lif	8,721.56
6120 Publications -Internet Svc	147.94
6130 Publicaitons - List Serv	486.00
Total Publications	12,652.94
Sales Expense	
6300 T-Shirt Sales	255.00
Total Sales Expense	255.00
Total Expense	27,096.03
Net Ordinary Income	-635.93
Net Income	-635.93

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American White Pelican, Pool 13, Clinton, 27 June 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



American White Pelican nest, Pool 13, Clinton, 27 June 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*Baltimore Oriole,
Boone, 12 July 2012.
Photograph by Larry
Dau, Boone, IA.*



Brown Thrasher, Fremont, 6 June 2012. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



Grasshopper Sparrow, Fremont, 3 June 2012. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



Great Egret nestlings, Pool 13, Clinton, 27 June 2012. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

Photo Quiz

Stephen J. Dinsmore

In future issues I will occasionally publish a photo quiz, often depicting a bird in an unusual pose or plumage. Only birds that have been recorded at least once in Iowa are candidates for this column. The bird does not have to be rare in Iowa for full consideration—indeed, photos of common birds are more than appropriate. In the next issue of *Iowa Bird Life* I'll provide a short discussion of the identification. If you have a high quality photo that you would like me to consider, please email it to me along with a caption that includes the species, date and location the photo were taken, and anything else of interest about the bird. I also invite others to contribute to the discussion of the identification of the bird in the photo. For now the photo will be printed in black and white, but as an IOU member you can access *Iowa Bird Life* through the IOU web page and view a color version of the photo. I'll start things off with this photo. Can you identify the bird?



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Institutional (domestic) \$30, Institutional (foreign) \$45, Goldfinch \$30, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <www.iowabirds.org>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer. Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

Photos and graphics: Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at cootjr@iastate.edu. Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue** (Vol. xx[1]), **April 1 for spring issue** [2], **July 1 for summer issue** [3], **October 1 for fall issue** [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 4 South Ridge Ct., Coralville, IA 52241 (cjcaster@earthlink.net).

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UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION: Spring: 3–5 May 2013, Waterloo.

FRONT COVER PHOTO: Wood Duck, Lake McBride, *Johnson*, 30 July 2012. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.

BACK COVER PHOTO: Upland Sandpiper fledgling, *Crawford*, 26 June 2012. Photograph by Tucker J. Lutter, Bronson, IA.

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